Commentary
Volume Fifty-Three, Number One January 1972

The Fall of EUROPE?
WALTER LAQUEUR

Quotas by Any Other Name
EARL RAAB

Browsing in Gangland
JOSEPH EPSTEIN

Wiretaps & National Security
ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ

A Blow Struck for the Revolution
JACOB MARATECK

Discords in the Music of Time
HERBERT HOWARTH

Journey of a Poet
IRVING HOWE

Movies: Youth; Manhood; Middle Age
WILLIAM S. PECHTER

Crime & the American Dream
NORMAN PODHORETZ

Books in Review:
James Q. Wilson on Kennedy Justice
Walter Goodman on Medical Care
John Hollander on Edward Hopper
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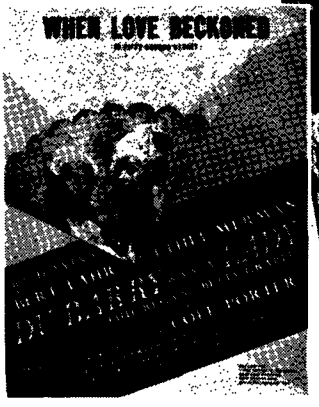

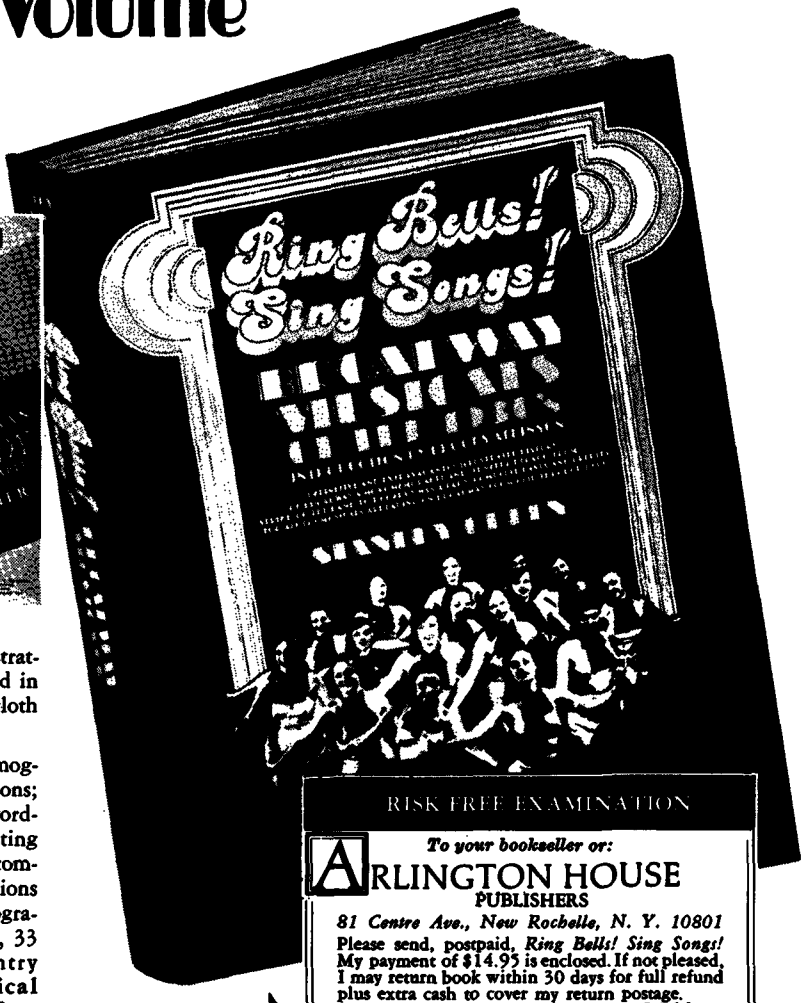

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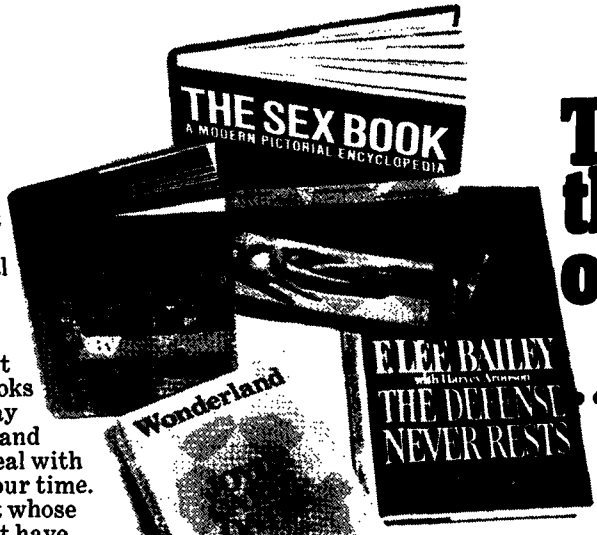

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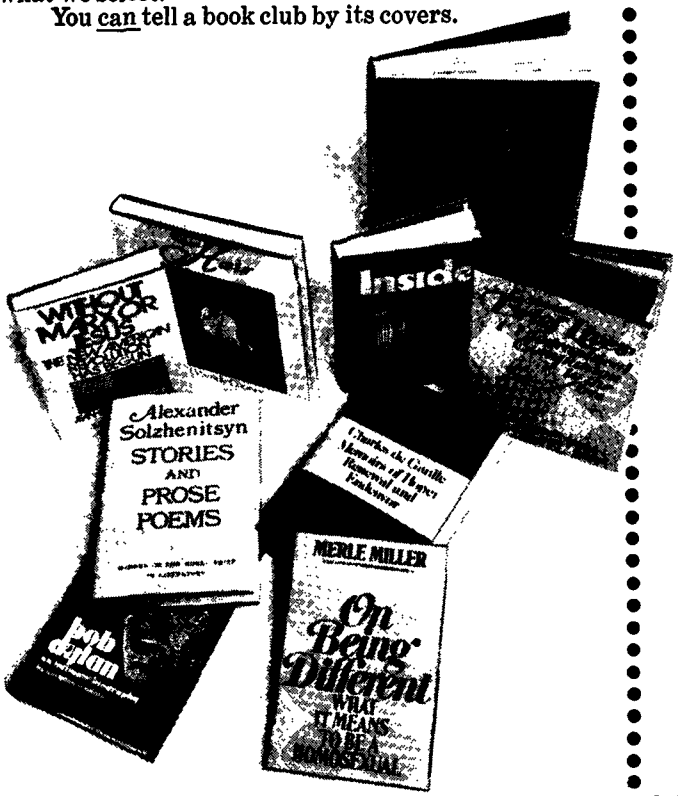

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Issues

Crime & the American Dream

Norman Podhoretz

JOSEPH EPSTEIN's piece on Capone, Lansky, and the Bonannos (p. 46) has set me to wondering what it is about gangsters that fascinates so many people, including myself. Following the lead of Robert Warshow's classic essay, "The Gangster as Tragic Hero," Mr. Epstein suggests that the figure of the gangster appeals to the anarchic underside of the American psyche: in Warshow's words, "our response to the gangster film is most consistently and most universally a response to sadism." But is it sadism that we respond to in reading a novel like *The Godfather* or the many non-fiction books about the Mafia and about other prominent underworld figures which have been published in recent years? I think not. I think, rather, that the delight we take in this literature is very similar to the delight people used to take in biographies of successful businessmen and in romantic novels about them. For the gangsters who fascinate us most today are not the straightforward thugs Warshow was writing about in 1948. Even if they sometimes continue (in a case, perhaps, of life imitating art) to look and act like the types portrayed by Edward G. Robinson, Paul Muni, James Cagney, and the rest, they claim our attention not primarily by virtue of their brutality but by virtue of their worldly success: they are self-made men who have started from nowhere and managed to climb to the top.

"The gangster's activity," Warshow said, "is actually a form of rational enterprise. . . . But this rationality is usually no more than a vague background; we know, perhaps, that the gangster sells liquor or that he operates a numbers racket; often we are not given even that much information. So his activity becomes a kind of pure criminality: he hurts people." Of *our* gangsters today—even a thug like Capone when he is written about today—just the opposite is true. What their chroniclers tell us, and indeed what we most want to know, is precisely what kind of rackets they work and how they got to work them. We seem, in other words, to be most curious about them in the aspect of their careers.

But what of their criminality? What role does it play for us? Paradoxically it serves, I believe, to legitimate them in our eyes as objects of interest and admiration. We still want to read about self-made men with the will, the energy, the daring, the boldness, and the ruthlessness to claw their way to the top. But so powerful has the animus against business and commerce become in our culture—and, by now, on every level of our culture—that no legitimate businessman could possibly serve as the hero of any such story. Only an illegitimate businessman could; which is to say a gangster. We may imagine (and according to Mario Puzo, some of the gangsters themselves do too) that we grant them heroic status because they are in a certain sense rebels against society. Yet surely the emphasis always placed today on the warmth and intensity of their family lives (where the old-style hero of the gangster film always had a bevy of show girls in tow, the gangsters who interest us today have wives to whom they are faithful and sons and daughters they love) is another sign that it is not their rebelliousness that really attracts us to them but, on the contrary, the respectable side of their lives and characters—the fact, that is, of their success.

Now Robert Warshow was well aware of the connection between the figure of the gangster and the American problem with success. The whole meaning of the gang-

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ster's career, he said, was the "drive for success." Conversely, the gangster's downfall was properly to be understood as a punishment for success: "At bottom the gangster is doomed because he is under the obligation to succeed, not because the means he employs are unlawful." In line with this reasoning, Warshow speculated that the gangster film performed the function of helping us "choose to fail."

Here too, I think, the opposite is more nearly the case today. The gangsters we read about today, I think, help us choose to succeed, and it is in thus helping us that they are once again perversely subversive of the prevalent cultural ethos. The gangster film Warshow was analyzing represented a way of saying No to "a cheerful view of life" and to a mass culture over which euphoria had spread "like the broad smile of an idiot." It is hardly necessary to demonstrate in detail that we no longer have a cheerful or optimistic view of life in this country, and as for the idiot, it is a long time since he was last seen smiling over anything, let alone over the "American Dream." In 1948 Warshow could write: "Nobody seriously questions the principle that it is the function of mass culture to maintain public morale, and certainly nobody in the mass audience objects to having his morale maintained"—especially, he added, on important ceremonial occasions. Today it is altogether characteristic of our mass culture that a major television network should celebrate one of the most important of all American ceremonial occasions, Thanksgiving, by broadcasting a documentary attempting to prove that even the successful in America have nothing to be thankful for.*

UNDER such circumstances, virtually the only way to say No to our culture is to express an affirmative attitude toward success; and virtually the only place in which such an attitude can still be expressed with impunity is in a story about a gangster, a rich and powerful gangster who is proud of his wealth and power, who carries them with relish and gusto, and who sees nothing to apologize for either in the possession or in the enjoyment. Ironically, then, the gangster, though no longer being used to say No to success, is still being used—and as effectively as ever, it would seem—to say No to the dominant cultural view.

*The program, shown this past Thanksgiving on CBS, was called " . . . but what if the Dream comes true?" and dealt with a prosperous family in a Michigan suburb. There was, incidentally, something demented in the huge discrepancy between the family we saw and heard on the screen and the narration which interpreted it all for us. The family was clearly living—and knew that it was living—a pleasant, privileged, but by no means trouble-free life; the narration kept insisting on an ominous reading of that life just as clearly arrived at in advance with the help of every cliché of American social criticism and bearing not the slightest relation to anything the camera could show or the family could be induced to say in answer, apparently, to the producer's leading questions. Naturally this did not prevent the television critic of the New York *Times* from describing the family entirely in terms of the false conception propagated by the narration.

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Letters From Readers

Apocalyptics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's comments in "Doomsday Fears & Modern Life" [October 1971] on what he imagines to be my views are as provocative as, no doubt, he intended them to be. But I would rather not have those of your readers who have not seen my article, "Making the Future Safe for Mankind" (the *Public Interest*, Summer 1971), form an idea of its contents or judge its merits in the light of Mr. Podhoretz's strictures since, for the most part, they are a little off target.

To touch on what may seem at first to be a minor point, I used the word "rational" (in talking of doomsday fears) to mean "agreeable to reason" where reason is founded on natural causes as distinct from supernatural ones. I believe this, or something like this, to be the accepted meaning of the term in ordinary use. In the context employed it should have been abundantly clear that the word was not to be extended to cover "scientific proofs." Mr. Podhoretz's firm assurance that "no proof exists that the end of the world is at hand" is therefore unnecessary. I should not undertake to prove scientifically that he would get killed at a certain time and place if he continued to stagger each afternoon across a busy highway heavily under the influence of drink. I would say, however, that unless he discontinued the practice the chances of his celebrating his seventieth birthday would not be high. In the circumstances, most sane men would regard my conjecture as reasonable.

Right or wrong, my argument was of that nature. Thus, current apprehensions are justified inasmuch as humanity is running an increasing risk in attempting to sustain the course of economic growth that began at least two centuries ago. (Putting it thus, incidentally, meets Mr. Podhoretz's observation that "Prophecies of doom are more likely to put people to sleep than wake them up: why bother striving if the end is in sight?" For if there is time yet to "repent of our evil ways," then we have a choice of action. In my assessment of the situation, there are measures we can still take to reduce risks.)

The rational basis for "today's doomsday fears" were, in fact, summarized by me as follows:

> Only since the last war have men succeeded finally in prying open Pandora's box and, among other exciting things which flew out, was the secret of instant annihilation of all living things. Time, measured only in short years, will disseminate this sort of knowledge among smaller, poorer, and less stable nations, some of which are ruled by adventurers or fanatics. From this prospect alone one may conclude that the chance of human life surviving for another century is not strong. To annihilation as the result of human irresponsibility, from military mischance or bluff carried too far, must be added the chances of extinction of our species from uncontrollable epidemics caused by the deadlier viruses that have evolved in response to widespread application of new "miracle" drugs, or from some ecological calamity caused by our inadvertent destruction of those forms of animal and insect life that once preyed on the pests that consumed men's harvests.

Now experts may indeed differ among themselves about the precise magnitudes and risks in respect to each of these things, but all of them would agree that before the 19th century there was no threat to the biosphere, no ecological threat to our survival, and no threat whatsoever of nuclear annihilation. How many today would say that there is no threat from any of these things? How many would say that the threat is declining?

I turn next to Mr. Podhoretz's observation of a "clear eagerness of the vast majority of people . . . to acquire or hold on to the benefits of life in an advanced industrial society," which he appears to regard as evidence in favor of economic growth. If Mr. Podhoretz were to observe me eagerly sawing and chopping up logs in my backyard he would, on the same logic, infer that I enjoyed the business. Further investigation, however, might reveal that the electric heating system had broken down, and that I had the choice either of freezing or of resorting to a more

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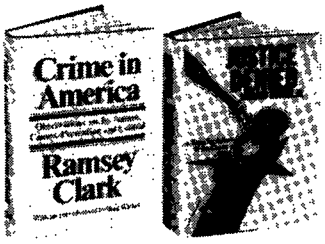

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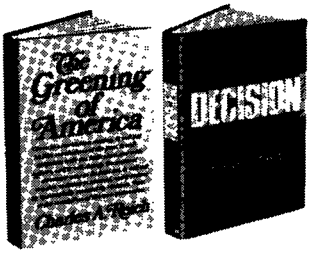

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From the mere observation that people buy goods with their money, and buy more goods as their income rises—that is, they do not throw away money or burn it—one cannot infer (a) that at a different set of prices, say one more closely reflecting their *social* costs, they would not buy very different amounts of the goods they currently buy (say, fewer cars and airplane trips and more houseroom), or (b) that people prefer the outcome of existing economic institutions to any other conceivable dispensation using the same resources, or (c) that they are becoming happier over time.

Compare the Britain of 1951—before the automobile and "development" had made hideous our cities and suburbs, before television held them in a semi-bovine state up to several hours a day, before the cult of hippiedom, drugs, and commercial pornography—with the America of 1971. The air was then clear of auto fumes, the skies were not rent by aircraft noise, and one could stroll along the streets, hear oneself converse, mingle in the parks or squares, linger on in the cafés, or walk through any part of the city at night without fear of molestation. If not carefree, at least people felt secure. No one thought of looking through a peephole before cautiously opening his front door. Compared with the figures for America today, homicide and suicide were negligible.

I am inviting Mr. Podhoretz to become a little more skeptical about the advantages of economic growth in the wealthier countries of the West. For in 1951, the British were still on rations. "Real" per capita consumption could not have been more than one-fifth of that current in the U.S. today. And I am prepared to assert—without "scientific proof"—that the British people in 1951 were more contented and cheerful than are the American people in 1971; that life in general was, then, far less frantic, wearing, and frustrating than it is today. (Mr. Podhoretz may wish to contradict this judgment, though he will not of course claim to be able to prove the contrary *scientifically*.) As Peter Oppenheimer once said: "The hallucinations of LSD are as nothing compared with those of GNP."

Finally, I cannot forbear to comment on Mr. Podhoretz's "third alternative" in his last paragraph. It is one thing to assert that instead of evincing concern or alarm at what is emerging one can accept "modern society" and console oneself with the unheroic thought that although there may have been better societies there must also have been worse ones. It is quite another to commend it, and to do so with an almost touching humility. In Mr. Podhoretz's words, this modern society is ". . . . in any case a viable possibility and a *natural* [*sic*] one: a poor thing, perhaps, but our own." That last clause is precious. It conjures up the vision of a tired Anglican vicar speaking with sentimental loyalty of the old village church to the more restive among his flock.

I hasten to remind him then that he is speaking in and also about the most powerful and wealthy country in the world. A country having a military budget in the region of $80 billion; a country that, having but 6 per cent of the world's population, uses up 40 per cent of the world's resources; a country pouring about as much effluent into the air and seas as the rest of the world put together. It is also a country whose increasing affluence has been accompanied by increasing restlessness, violence, and obscenity, whose vast postwar expenditures, public and private, have succeeded only in making a wasteland of its cities. It is a country in which fifty-five thousand people each year are being killed by one another through automobile accidents alone, and ten times that number crippled. It is a country whose unparalleled productive capacity is currently engaged in producing more "expendables," more "regrettables," more "inimicals"—briefly more garbage, literally and figuratively—per capita than any other country. (Value judgment? Yes.) One could go on, of course, but why bother? For the gist of the matter is that this squalid and unforeseen outcome is the result of two hundred years of sustained material progress and scientific advance. In that sense it is indeed "a poor thing." But to place upon it one's benediction; to hug it to one's breast? Surely not, Mr. Podhoretz!

EZRA J. MISHAN
London School of Economics
London, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's strictures on the apocalyptic vision miss the

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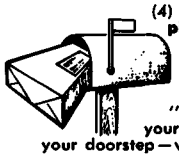

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point. Let us grant with him that there is no respectable evidence which proves that the viability of human existence on earth is threatened; nonetheless, viability is not the issue. What *is* at stake, to environmentalists, is the quality of human life. At the risk of being tiresome, let us recall some familiar facts of life in America today: every year, more than fifty thousand people are killed by automobiles; the Potomac River around Washington, D.C. is so polluted that you are warned to wash immediately if any of its waters touch you; almost every major city in the United States finds it necessary to broadcast smog reports daily; the Cuyahoga River burns. While this goes on, American industry and American consumers mindlessly demand the production of more and more superfluous luxuries, of which the SST is the preeminent symbol, which will accelerate the deterioration of our environment even more. If we deliberately slaughtered those fifty-thousand persons annually to propitiate some Moloch, we would be thought mad by men of a superior civilization; that we do so to propitiate the makers and drivers of unsafe, excessively-powered cars only slightly mitigates our madness. Who then is the dangerous madman, the chiliastic crank who foretells an unlikely doom, or (to cite just one example uninvidiously) the oil-consortium executive who demands that we rape Alaska to get oil on the Arctic shelf? One need not hold any brief for false prophets to recognize that they pose less immediate danger to American society than those who howl for more oil, more cars, more interstate highways, more asphalt parking lots. The cranks are perhaps even less dangerous than those who peddle the complacent view that we must "accept modern society, with its imperatives of restless growth, as a *viable* human possibility. . . ." Viable, probably; humane, civilized, tolerable? No.

WILLIAM M. WIECEK
Department of History
University of Missouri
Columbia, Missouri

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Though I agree with much of what Norman Podhoretz says, I am not as confident of human survival as he seems to be. . . .

It is easy to demolish the utopian writings of an Alvin Toffler or a Charles Reich. But, on the other hand, to claim that the doomsday fears of today have no rational basis is an astounding thought. Perhaps someone writing in the pages of COMMENTARY will convince us that the studies of Harrison Brown, Barry Commoner, Paul and Anne Ehrlich, and J. W. Forrester do not offer "persuasive evidence" that we are facing an environmental disaster and that our future life is in danger. In the meantime, I am afraid that Mr. Podhoretz's pooh-poohing of doomsday fears will only contribute to the neglect of urgently needed measures.

L. H. GRUNEBAUM
Scarsdale, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz says that "the doomsday fears of today have as much or as little rational basis as doomsday fears ever did, if by rational we mean subject to scientific proof. No proof exists that the end of the world is at hand. We do not even have persuasive evidence pointing to that conclusion."

But it is not possible for a magazine like COMMENTARY to deal with this topic today because federal law, through the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission's information-control regulations, does not permit . . . the dissemination of scientific data concerning nuclear reactions which are known to be capable of igniting the earth's oceans and atmosphere in one single thermonuclear blast that could result in the literal fulfillment of Bible prophecies concerning the end of the world.

Of course, even if federal law which now prevents the common people of our nation from gaining access to reliable scientific data on nuclear reactions . . . were to be repealed . . . science would not undertake to predict just exactly at what time in the future such an event might happen. Nevertheless, modern nuclear science really has produced very reliable and trustworthy data on the subject . . . and it has completely eliminated any doubt that . . . the end of the world is surely coming at some time. . . .

BURNET OUTTEN, JR.
Cocoa, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz has written a convincing and thoughtful critique of some of the wide variety of doomsday philosophies currently the subject of too much mindless cocktail chatter and far too little serious analysis. As a social democrat, what concerns me is that politics, particularly Left politics, is becoming saturated with the religious fervor that views important political issues as moral ones

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on which the future of all humanity rides. The best examples of this to date can be seen in the universities, where some radicals have construed political issues as moral imperatives requiring immediate, and too often violent, action to "smash racism and imperialism" and to "liberate the university." This political evangelism, which actually has a strong apolitical quality, is based, in part, on a deep revulsion against liberal institutions and rational discourse. It is, I believe, a profoundly dangerous aberration because it unleashes expectations and desires which cannot possibly be satisfied through the limited mechanisms of parliamentary democracy. The politics of apocalypse will ultimately produce desperation and fanaticism and will lead those who believe the end is at hand to choose the commune (at best) and the bomb (at worst) over the ballot box. Thus, when I recently saw young people carrying banners of Che, Fidel, and Mao while at the same time proclaiming a new socialist humanism, I was overcome with the truth of Ortega y Gasset's observation: "Do not believe a word you hear from the young when they talk about the 'New Morality.'. . . When young people talk of the New Morality, they are merely committing a new immorality and looking for a way of introducing contraband goods." . . .

MARK W. WEBER
Oak Park, Illinois

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

Far from demonstrating that my account of his position was "off target," Ezra Mishan shows that I represented it fairly; he even singles out the same passage from his article in the *Public Interest* from which I myself quoted (accurately). That passage bears on the issue of whether the doomsday fears of today are more rational than the same fears which were experienced so often in the past. I am happy to note that Mr. Mishan agrees on what in my view is the crucial point: that no *scientific* proof exists that the end of the world is at hand. Mr. Mishan thinks that my assurances on this matter are "unnecessary." Unnecessary? To him, perhaps, at least when he is pressured by criticism into more scrupulously nuanced formulations and more carefully drawn distinctions. Surely, however, it is all too necessary to insist on this point to a growing number of people like Mr. Outten who are under the illusion that a scientific case has indeed already been made for the proposition that the end of the world is in sight.

But, I am asked by Mr. Mishan and Mr. Grunebaum, what about something short of scientific proof? Aren't the doomsday fears of today at least *reasonable*? And don't the studies of Harrison Brown, Barry Commoner, Paul Ehrlich, etc. offer persuasive evidence that "our future life is in danger"? My answer is that every one of these writers, including Mr. Mishan himself, presents a distinct case which has to be examined with a skeptical eye before we can begin to make a rational judgment of whether and to what extent it is valid or responsible. Even without the help of such examinations we can already see that all these writers contradict one another on so many important matters that it becomes impossible to lump them together, in the fashion of Mr. Grunebaum, as the makers of any single case of any kind about anything. Commoner, for instance, in contrast to Ehrlich, seems to believe that it is not the growth of population, and in contrast to Mishan that it is not economic growth per se, but the production of synthetics which ultimately threatens the ecology. They can't all be right, and it may even be that they are all wrong, and possibly worse than wrong. Most of us, for example, have been taking it for granted that the case against DDT is founded on solid evidence. Yet just recently Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, who won the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize for his work in developing wheat strains, has contended (citing the words of the World Health Organization) that the "safety record of DDT to man is truly remarkable," and has denounced what he calls "the vicious, hysterical propaganda campaign against the use of agricultural chemicals, being promoted today by fear-provoking irresponsible environmentalists . . . [and] doom sayers" (New York *Times*, September 21, 1971). Mr. Grunebaum is afraid that my attack on doomsday fears "will only contribute to the neglect of urgently needed measures." If Dr. Borlaug is right (and an attempted refutation of his argument by Barry Commoner subsequently published in the *Times* struck me as very weak indeed), Mr. Grunebaum might better be worrying not about the neglect but rather about the taking

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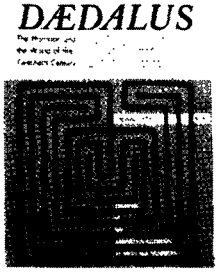

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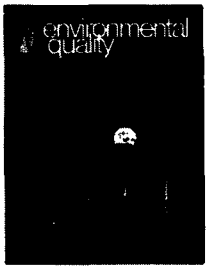

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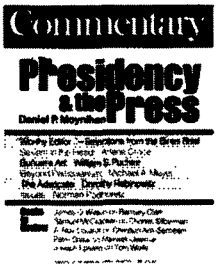

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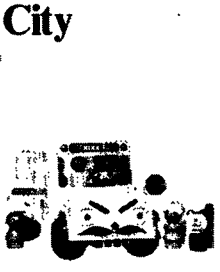

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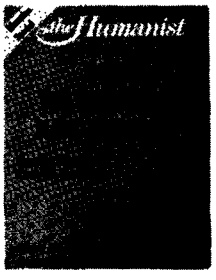

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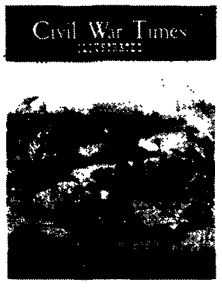

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of measures which are declared by the "doom sayers" to be urgently needed. For according to Dr. Borlaug, the banning of pesticides could do incalculable damage in the underdeveloped world where, "mostly thanks to DDT," more than a billion people "have been freed from the risk of malaria in the past 25 years" with resultant economic benefits of many different kinds.

Contrary to what Mr. Grunebaum and Mr. Wiecek apparently imagine, I neither said nor implied in "Doomsday Fears & Modern Life" that we who are living today are not confronted with problems and dangers peculiar to this moment in time (though, as Mr. Mishan chooses to forget, we have also been spared many other problems and dangers peculiar to other times). What I did say was that many of the problems and dangers we face today are consequences of technological development, and that the problems themselves, along with the anxieties they inspire, are part of the price we pay for the benefits of technological development. Both Mr. Mishan and Mr. Wiecek go on at eloquent if tiresome length about this price, not to show that it is too high and can perhaps be reduced (which is what I attempted to propose), but to suggest that it is, in Mr. Wiecek's revealing term, intolerable. In this sense their letters, which refuse to see any connection between the benefits of technological development and the conditions making for a "humane, civilized" society, provide a good illustration of what I had in mind when I accused people of their ideological persuasion of a philistine attitude toward "the gains in freedom of every kind—from want, from disease, from tribal coercion, from claustrophobia" that we purchase "through the sacrifice of other undoubted goods to the gods of advanced modernity."

Mr. Mishan is reminded, he tells us, of a "tired Anglican vicar" when he finds me writing that the life we lead in the modern world is "a poor thing, perhaps, but our own." Being at bottom a preacher (of the fundamentalist cast, I should say, rather than the Anglican), his mind naturally runs in the direction of churchly analogies, which is no doubt why he missed the allusion in my phrase to Touchstone's famous description in *As You Like It* of the country wench he has decided to marry: "a poor virgin, sir, an ill-favored thing, sir, but mine own." The feeling expressed by Touchstone here is too complex, too laden with double ironies, to be described as a "benediction"—and I leaned on it because I wanted to express something similarly complex about the life to which we are inescapably married today. I am surprised that Mr. Mishan failed to catch the reference to Shakespeare, but I cannot pretend to be surprised by his failure to perceive complexities in the argument of an opponent. For it is just his blindness to complexity in discussing larger matters like the quality of life in advanced industrial societies—a blindness Mr. Wiecek seems fully to share—which accounts for the intellectually simplistic and morally unbalanced judgments Mr. Mishan is forever "inviting" us to accept about the life we live today.

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To the Editor of Commentary:

"How Jewish Quotas Began," by Stephen Steinberg [September 1971], awakened old memories that confirm what he writes. I graduated from CCNY at the age of nineteen, but I was too young to take the examination to teach high-school mathematics in New York City. I decided therefore to return to Columbia to study engineering, and I entered the Engineering School in 1919. I did so well in my first year that two professors seeing my poverty (incidentally, both of them were Christian) recommended me for a scholarship. All I had to do was to fill out a form and return it to the dean's assistant. But when I entered his office, . . . he sat me down and told me how difficult it would be for me to obtain any engineering work. He proceeded to inform me that a former student had given up his studies and had become a salesman of pots and pans in the Catskills and was making all kinds of money, and he recommended that I too give up my studies. Here I acted a bit foolishly. I told him in crude language that I wouldn't leave and I tore up my scholarship application . . . but I understand that he did succeed in getting rid of two other Jews, who left to study medicine. . . .

One other incident. The assistant dean was quite correct about

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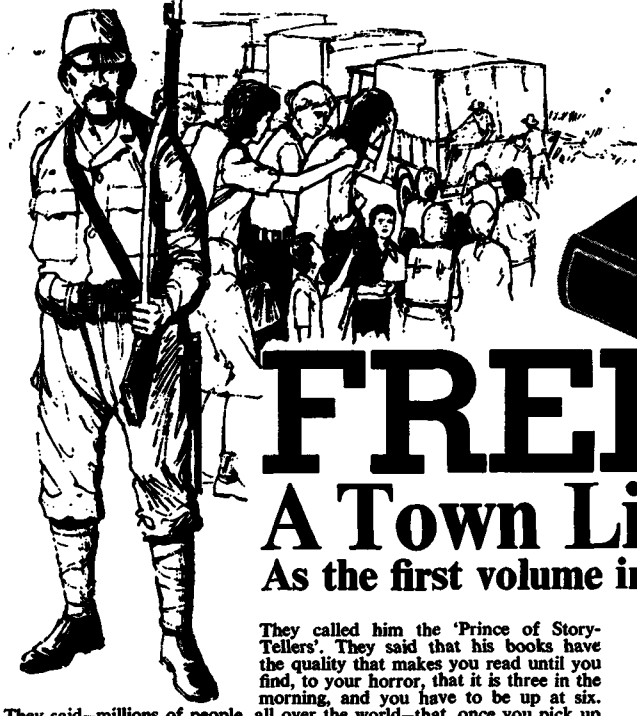

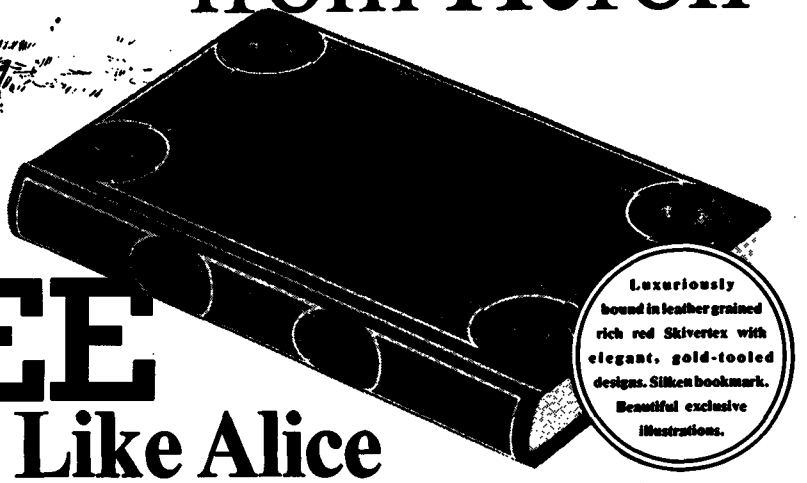

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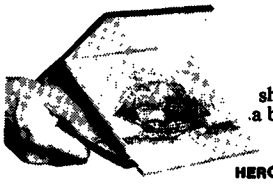

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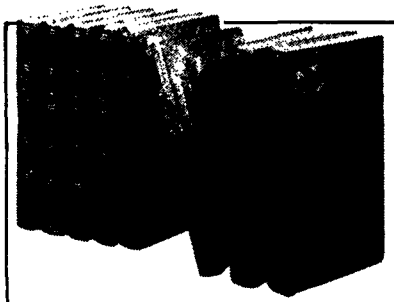

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the difficulty a Jew would have obtaining engineering work. My professor recommended me to the head of the Long Island Electric Co., himself a Columbia graduate. This man wrote me a letter, asking that I call him on the telephone to make an appointment . . . and he practically offered me a job on the phone. But the moment I entered his office the next day, things changed. He had me fill out a form and told me I would hear from him in two weeks. Time passed and nothing happened. I then wrote him to remind him of his promise but, unfortunately, I never preserved his answering letter: it was the most anti-Semitic explosion I have ever seen. . . .

There is much more I could add that would corroborate Mr. Steinberg's article. The quota system for Jews still exists in many, many, firms, make no mistake about that. . . .

LOUIS JACOBS

Forest Hills, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As those who witnessed the shutdown of City College in the spring of 1969 know, the problems of college admissions are of great contemporary importance. . . . Stephen Steinberg's "How the Quota System Began" [*sic*] can only add to the confusion on this subject. From the title, one would expect a discussion of the *numerus clausus* or quota system. . . . Instead, Mr. Steinberg shows how geographical representation came to be taken into account in the Harvard admissions process. He does not demonstrate that the percentage of Jews attending Harvard College declined after 1923, nor does he state how many colleges actually adopted such a policy.

Further, he appears unsure as to what geographical representation was supposed to accomplish. At one point, it is asserted that the aim was to "preserve the upper-class and Protestant character of the elite Eastern colleges." However, in the detailed discussion of the Harvard plan, we learn that the faculty report recommended "the building up of a new group of men from the West and the South and, in general, from the good high schools in towns and small cities." A *numerus clausus* would have discriminated against Jews, but a geographical quota which would have discriminated against Eastern students, as proposed by the faculty, could have eliminated many of the students whom Harvard administrators considered the most socially desirable. . . .

The article's real purpose, apparently, is not to discuss the *numerus clausus*, but to show the origins of the policy of geographic representation, and it seems to have been written in response to actions taken at several Midwestern universities. Yet Mr. Steinberg is incorrect in asserting that such restrictions are "new to state universities in the West." In the 1870's, for example, James B. Angell, the President of the University of Michigan, defended the admission of out-of-state students against criticism in the press and in the state legislature, arguing that a national constituency was beneficial to the university, and that the discriminatory fees imposed upon out-of-state students were keeping the university in the black. Most state universities have had restrictions on out-of-state applicants ever since.

By associating policies which may have at one time or another been used as mechanisms of discrimination with the term "quota system," Mr. Steinberg leaves a very distorted impression. At one point, he correctly argues, "The most common ploy used in discrimination in the 20's was the introduction of character tests and psychological exams." Jews at the time voiced many complaints about intelligence examinations, commonly referred to as psychological tests. Mr. Steinberg devotes a brief paragraph to character tests, but does not discuss the intelligence test at all. In the battle over admissions policies at the City University recently, the white, largely Jewish population insisted on the maintenance of the admissions criteria of high-school average and College Board scores. Ironically, the Scholastic Aptitude Test is a descendant of the old intelligence test, although its advocates now claim that it merely measures aptitude for college work and not intelligence. At the City University, minority groups complained that such tests discriminated against them, and the whites became their staunchest defenders.

Mr. Steinberg's position on . . . the effects and the pervasiveness of the "quota system," is unclear. In his very first paragraph, he asserts that a high percentage of the faculty in many universities is Jewish and that this is the result of the tremendous expansion of higher education and of the "lowering of discriminatory barriers that once limited Jewish access to many private colleges, including some of the most prestigious in the nation." By page 73, however, he seems to have had second thoughts about the damage really inflicted by discrimination, as can be seen in his statement that "the quotas of the 1920's did not constitute a major obstacle to Jewish aspirations."

A careful reading of Mr. Steinberg's article reveals that he found himself "unable to determine precisely how prevalent quotas were during the 1920's." He appears to have relied upon only one source when discussing the assertions of "writers of the period" that most colleges had adopted some kind of restrictive device. Although the name of Heywood Broun is not mentioned in the article, it is apparent that Mr. Steinberg relied upon Broun's *Christians Only: A Study in Prejudice* (New York, 1931), which he wrote with George Britt, for all the data on pages 72 and 73: the sum total of his evidence for the existence of a quota system.

Mr. Steinberg has to resort to phrases like "New York University *was reported to*" and "*Rumor had it* that Princeton . . . (emphasis added) simply because Broun himself uses secondhand and often unsupported evidence. Thus we are told by Mr. Steinberg in three different places that Columbia cut its enrollment of Jews in half between 1920 and 1922; these statements appear to have been derived . . . from page 74 of Broun's book, but Broun does not tell us his source for that figure.

The discussion then turns to New York University, again quoting without attribution from Broun's discussion. Significantly, Mr. Steinberg does not quote the figures Broun *does* provide concerning NYU's Jewish enrollment, probably since they show an increase in this percentage between 1922-23 and 1928-29. Dean Archibald L. Bouton of University Heights, who is only partly quoted in Mr. Steinberg's article, said in 1922, "At present approximately 40 per cent of our student body is Protestant, 30 per cent is Catholic and 30 per cent is Jewish" (Broun, p. 108). According to the figures supplied to Broun by the Registrar of NYU, the University College was 54.3 per cent Jewish in 1928-29. . . .

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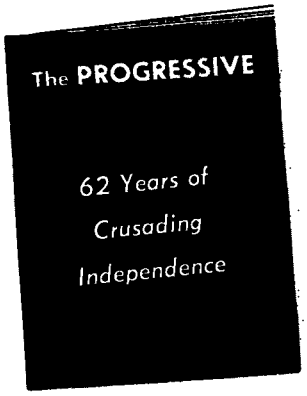

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Since Mr. Steinberg relies so heavily on the Harvard incident as setting the precedent for future policies, it is fair neither to Broun nor to Harvard that Broun's conclusion about Harvard, written in 1931, is not taken into account: "In the case of Harvard, there was a very vigorous and concerted protest against the proposed policy of instituting the quota system. Many prominent Jews got into the fight as well as a number of distinguished Gentiles. Indeed comment was so hot that President Lowell dropped the scheme and there is no quota scheme at Harvard today, not even a secret one" (Broun, p. 54).

That there has been discrimination against Jews in college admissions practices in the past is not questioned here; however, if admissions policies are to be intelligently designed in the future, they must be carefully evaluated within the context of the goals of the institution in question, and not judged by a generalized fear of a quota system and all other mechanisms that, at one time or another throughout history, were used for discriminatory purposes.

HAROLD WECHSLER
Department of History
Columbia University
New York City

STEPHEN STEINBERG writes:

Harold Wechsler's misreading of my article begins with the title. I did not call it "How the Quota System Began" but rather "How Jewish Quotas Began." This is significant because Mr. Wechsler appears to construe my article as a covert attack on *all* quotas. In particular, he accuses me of fostering a "generalized fear of a quota system" that, he implies, will reflect badly on benign quotas currently employed by some colleges to increase their enrollment of minority groups. But my article was about the origin of *Jewish* quotas. These, I showed, were designed to preserve the upper-class and Protestant character of certain Eastern colleges. They functioned to give additional advantage to groups that were already privileged, and cannot be equated with quotas favoring "disprivileged" minorities. Mr. Wechsler seems to think that one has to be either for or against quotas, and therefore is uncomfortable about accepting the facts concerning Jewish quotas. But this stems from a failure to recognize the difference between a quota predicated on bigotry and one whose purpose is to counteract bigotry.

Mr. Wechsler's ideological blinkers lead him to charge that I merely traced the origin of a system of geographical representation in college recruitment, and not of Jewish quotas as such. While it is true that quotas in American higher education were never explicit and officially sanctioned, as was the *numerus clausus* in Eastern Europe, we need not be so easily fooled. Various subterfuges for discrimination were used, and geographical criteria in admissions was one of them. In the case of Harvard, the adoption of geographical criteria was a direct offshoot of the avalanche of criticism that followed President Lowell's indiscreet announcement that the university was considering a limitation on Jewish enrollment. Mr. Wechsler is extremely naive, to say the least, to fail to see the discriminatory intent of these geographical restrictions.

While Harvard routinely collected information regarding the religious background of applicants, the figures were rarely made public. For this reason I conceded that it was not possible to gauge the effect of Harvard's revised admissions procedures. However, I did indicate (three times according to Mr. Wechsler's count) that similar action at Columbia had drastically reduced the Jewish enrollment there. This was clearly indicated in the following report appearing in the New York *Times* (January 23, 1923):

> The authorities at Columbia would not comment on the statement of Harold Riegelman charging that Jews had been discriminated against at the university, but it was pointed out that the decrease in the number of Jewish students in the last three years was due to a natural change in the geographical distribution of the student body.

According to the *Times* report, the proportion of students from the New York area had decreased from 80 to 50 per cent, with a corresponding increase from other states, especially those west of the Mississippi. It is evident that colleges could, and did, limit their Jewish enrollments by manipulating the geographical distribution of their students.

The above quotation from the *Times* also begins to answer Mr. Wechsler's erroneous assumption that "the sum total of Mr. Steinberg's evidence for the existence of a quota system" is derived from a single source: a 1931 study called *Christians Only*, by Heywood Broun and George Britt. In addition to the *Times*, an article in the *Nation* six months earlier also asserted that "Columbia in the past two years reduced the percentage of Jews in her incoming classes from 40 per cent to 22" ("May Jews Go to College?" June 4, 1922). It continued: "New York University is reported to have effected even more stringent restrictions, and other universities have adopted or are considering similar methods." Articles like this one formed the basis for my statement that "writers of the period give the impression that by 1930 most private colleges with a large and growing Jewish enrollment had instituted some kind of restrictive device."At the same time I was careful to say that "it is not possible to determine precisely how prevalent quotas were in the 1920's."

In grappling with this issue I did borrow from Broun and Britt's study some isolated facts concerning anti-Semitic incidents or restrictive patterns at several campuses other than Harvard and Columbia. In scaling down an academic paper with footnotes, I neglected to give Broun and Britt the usual citation. However, far from constituting my exclusive source of evidence, material from their study enters my article only tangentially, and occupies a sum total of one paragraph—the one that Mr. Wechsler quotes from prodigiously in no fewer than four paragraphs of his letter.

Finally, there is Mr. Wechsler's criticism that "it is fair neither to Broun nor to Harvard" (Wechsler is hardly being fair to Britt!) to neglect to mention Broun and Britt's conclusion that ". . . President Lowell dropped the scheme and there is no quota scheme at Harvard today, not even a secret one." Again, one can only wonder whether Mr. Wechsler's unconscious is playing havoc with him. Broun and Britt did not say that there was no quota "scheme" at Harvard, as Mr. Wechsler indicates, but rather that there was no quota "system." On closer examination, it appears that there was indeed a quota *scheme* instituted at Harvard, in the form of geographical criteria in admissions, and this is why I ignored Broun and Britt's unsubstantiated opinion on the matter. In this respect, as in others, Mr.

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Environment vs. Heredity

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Wechsler shows a tendency—unfortunate in a historian—to accept the official interpretation of events. Those like Mr. Jacobs who have personally confronted bigoted institutions are less gullible.

On the Sephardim

To the Editor of Commentary:

Edouard Roditi's "The Real Grandees" [Oct. 1971] contains several errors.

The de Solas cannot be considered one of "New York's most prominent Sephardic families." They flourished in the Sephardic congregations of Amsterdam, Curacao, London, and Montreal. The first descendant of the family to be associated with the New York congregation was the late Dr. David de Sola Pool, who was born in London.

It is not true that there was massive emigration from Spain to Portugal, Italy, or North Africa shortly before the expulsion order of 1492 became official. Jewish emigration from Spain was minimal between 1400 and 1492. The Abravanels emigrated to Portugal during the 14th century. Don Isaac Abravanel, a second-generation Portuguese, sought and obtained refuge in Spain in 1493, fleeing Portugal for political reasons not connected with his Jewishness. The itinerary given by Mr. Roditi is erroneous.

There is no record of any Portuguese Sephardic family by the name of Pires and I do not believe that such a "Portuguese" name as Brandaos exists. Mr. Roditi's "Sephardic" etymology of Polish Ashkenazic names is unacceptable.

Mr. Roditi writes that the Inquisition "began to threaten Jews again—this time as 'Judaizing heretics' rather than as Jews." The word "again" is superfluous—the Inquisition never threatened the Jews *as Jews*. It was not empowered to do so.

Mr. Roditi suggests that New York's earliest Sephardic settlers, the twenty-three who arrived in 1654 on the *St. Charles*, "may have first settled officially in Portuguese Brazil as Christians." This is not so. They were all Dutch subjects who had emigrated from Amsterdam *as Jews* to the ill-fated Dutch colony in Brazil.

Mr. Roditi writes that "it was only the most desperate who found themselves reduced to seeking their fortunes in the Americas. . . ." This statement is untrue as regards the 17th century. The elite of the Portuguese-Jewish community in Amsterdam emigrated to Brazil. The rest would soon have followed if the colony had remained in Dutch hands. Menasseh ben Israel was profoundly dejected because his colleague, Isaac Aboab da Fonseca, had been chosen for the post of *Haham* in Brazil, at a salary three times that which he earned in Amsterdam. . . .

Contrary to Mr. Roditi's assertion, there was no Sephardic community in Genoa or Modena.

The Belinfante family came from the Ottoman Empire to Holland during the 18th century and did not set up as "printers and publishers" until the beginning of the 19th. They were not known to Menasseh ben Israel or to Spinoza.

The name Seixas, like most Portuguese names borne by Sephardic Jews, is not "Jewish." It is not true that at the forced conversion of all the Jews in Portugal in 1497 they "were generally given . . . the family name of the Christian godfather who thus adopted them." A surname like that of New York's Patriot Rabbi, Gershom Mendes Seixas, contains a name taken at conversion—Mendes—and the name of a small Portuguese town near the Spanish border—Seixas. A name like Mendes was probably not received from a Christian godfather, but picked out at random among common Portuguese surnames. Seixas would have been added to Mendes when the family moved from the village where they had settled after their expulsion from Spain, to avoid confusion with myriads of related and unrelated Mendes families in a larger town.

I wonder what proof Mr. Roditi has for his explanation of such *converso* names as Santa Maria, Espirito Santo, or de la Cruz. (It should be noted that among the Portuguese ex-Marrano families in the Sephardic congregations of Europe and the Americas none of these names was represented). . . .

Mr. Roditi's principal objection to Stephen Birmingham's book, *The Grandees*, is its non-scholarly and superficial treatment of complex historical problems. It seems to me that the reviewer should have taken greater care to get his own facts straight.

H. P. Salomon
Department of Romance Languages
State University of New York
Albany, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was pleased to see that Edouard Roditi debunked Stephen Birmingham's *The Grandees* and at the same time the claim of the old Sephardic community to superior status within American Jewry. . . .

Julius Frank
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Edouard Roditi's interesting essay about Sephardic Jews is a welcome corrective not only to Stephen Birmingham's well-intentioned trivialities but also to the abysmal ignorance of most American Jews on the subject.

I must take issue, however, with Mr. Roditi's suggestion that the great Danish critic, Georg Brandes, may have been of Sephardic descent, and his reasoning that the name Brandes derives from Brandaos. Perhaps it does, perhaps not, but the name which Georg Brandes was given at birth (and under which he grew to manhood) was Morris Cohen, from which one may make other deductions, equally fanciful.

The etymology of a family name is a reliable guide to family history only to the extent that the name really is a received name and not an adopted one. Even then, of course, there are pitfalls, especially among us Jews.

Joseph B. Russell
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

To harp on aristocracy in this "age of the masses" as Edouard Roditi does in his article seems a bit incongruous. As an American-born Sephardic Jew, I contend that Sephardim have lived too much on past accomplishments and drawn too much sustenance from ancestors, distinguished or not, to the detriment of present generations. . . . I make this observation although the genealogy of my mother's family, Israel, has been carefully traced back to Spain, Safed, and thence to the Isle of Rhodes. . . . Moreover, its members were frequently decorated by Turkish Sultans and more recently by an Italian Emperor. Despite all this, I remain more concerned with the upbringing of my children, their education, and the quality of their citizenship.

Whether or not the first Jews who came to America were princes or paupers, or even Sephardic, seems not too relevant. . . . Perhaps Stephen Birmingham was in-

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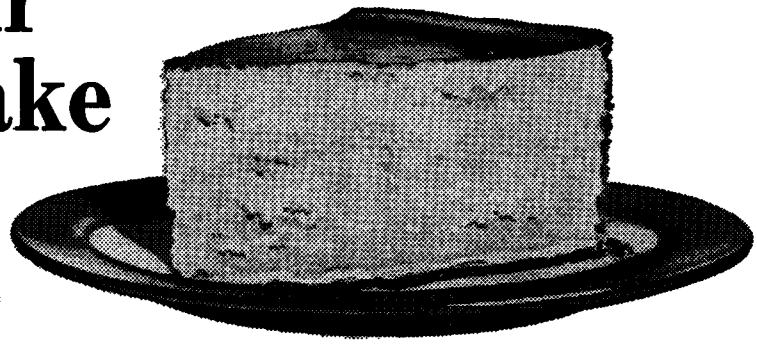

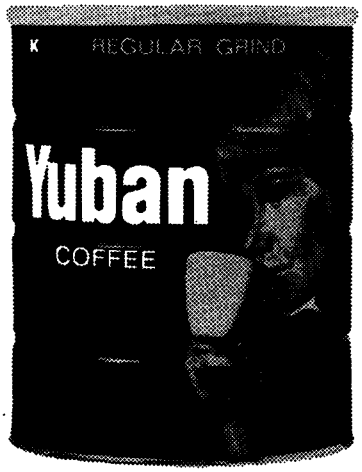

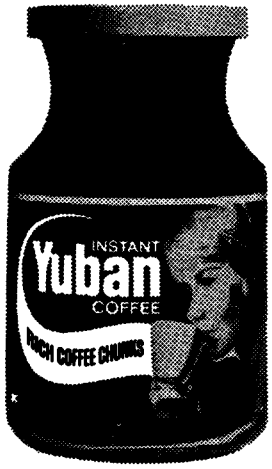

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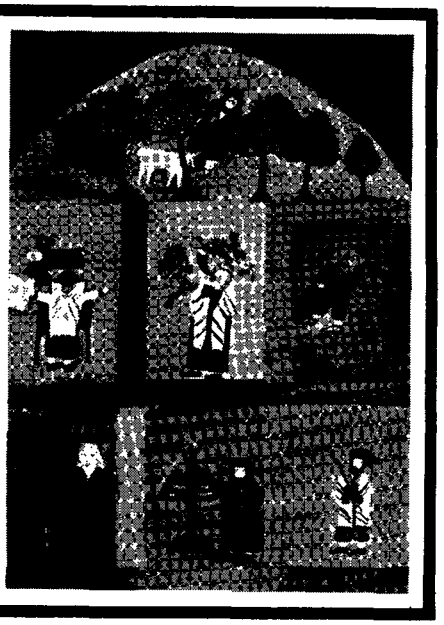

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Hank Laventhol was born in Philadelphia in 1927, and now makes his home in Chappaqua, New York. His degree in Fine Arts from Yale was augmented by studies at the Academia di Belli Arti, Florence, and other art centers in Europe.

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correct and his misstatements of fact and interpretation should be rectified. However, Mr. Roditi must himself be corrected when he states that "America's Sephardic elite failed to produce, throughout the whole of the 19th century, a single scholar, writer, or artist of note, with the exception of the minor poet Emma Lazarus (of Statue-of-Liberty fame) and the little-known portrait painter, Jacob Hart Lazarus, both of whom Birmingham ticks off in a line or two." Mr. Roditi has completely overlooked the Cardozo family which produced, in the 19th century, America's outstanding intellectual economist and journalist, Jacob Nuñez Cardozo, and in the 20th century, the Supreme Court Justice, Benjamin Cardozo.

Jacob Cardozo was born in 1786 in Savannah, Georgia, and grew up in Charleston, South Carolina. Although he had meager formal education, he became a reporter and then publisher of the *Southern Patriot*. Jacob became an influential thinker in early America, expounding and spreading his ideas in his editorials, in articles in learned journals, and through his contributions to economics. . . . Although his reputation was dimmed by the Civil War, he has been recently rediscovered. In 1826 he published a book, *Notes on Political Economy*, which has recently been reissued by Augustus M. Kelley of New York. He had something of an elitist point of view, was in favor of laissez-faire and opposed to active government intervention in the economy. He was a man of considerable energy, vision, and great ambition. . . . While neither he nor his father came to America on the *St. Charles*, his family was among the early Sephardim who came here from England. Mr. Roditi has overlooked an outstanding American-Jewish thinker of the 19th century.

JOSEPH A. HASSON
Rockville, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Edouard Roditi makes an error of fact in regard to the Brandon family. . . . Sir Charles Brandon was created Duke of Suffolk in 1514 by King Henry VIII, but the title became extinct in 1551. The later Earls of Suffolk were of the Howard family and had no connection with the Brandons. . . .

PAUL SILVERSTONE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The very ancient Portuguese name Brandao, or Brandam, before being adopted in its Portuguese form, appears to have been originally borrowed from the Irish name Brendan, the name of an Irish saint who was one of the patron saints of the early Portuguese navigators. Saint Brendan is reported to have sailed the Atlantic in the Dark Ages and to have discovered there the legendary Isle of Saint Brendan, which continued to be fancifully depicted in many maps of the Middle Ages as late as the early 16th century.

A Portuguese *converso* of Jewish origin, Duarte Brandao, or Brandon, came to England in the 15th century where he introduced the Portuguese version of his name, already known in England in its Irish form. This very wealthy Knight of the Order of the Garter was later remembered among the ancestors of several noble families, both in England and in Portugal.

MARIA AMELIA DE AZEVEDO PINTO
Editor, *Ocidente*
Lisbon, Portugal

EDOUARD RODITI writes:

To H. P. Salomon: of course I knew when the de Sola family first came to New York, but considerations of space prevented me from quoting the full history of its migrations.

There were constant movements of Jews between North Africa and Spain, especially to and from Moorish Spain, throughout the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance.

Don Isaac Abravanel was not the only Iberic Jew to bear this distinguished family name. His son, Judah Abravanel, complains in his *Elegy on Destiny* of the loss of his own only son, who had been kidnapped and forcibly baptized and not allowed to emigrate. Other related Abravanels, whose descendants continued for a long time to be active in community affairs in Salonica and elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, followed different itineraries in their emigration from the Iberic peninsula.

Pires appears as a Portuguese spelling of Perez in a great number of Portuguese deeds and other documents. As a name, it is not necessarily Jewish. It is true that Brandaos does not exist as a Portuguese family name but is the plural form that would normally be used when referring to several members of the Brandao family: *os Brandaos*. It might thus have survived as a family name in areas where niceties of Portuguese grammar and spelling are not respected.

The Inquisition did threaten practicing Jews who had been forcibly baptized, but then accused them only of being "Judaizing heretics."

The Dutch Sephardim of Brazil are known to have attracted to their community a number of Portuguese crypto-Jews who happened to be in Portuguese Brazil.

It would be quite wrong to suggest that all the elite of Amsterdam's Sephardic community emigrated to Brazil. Only a few outstanding Sephardim were attracted to Dutch Brazil's small community.

Sephardic refugees are known to have passed through Genoa and Modena, or to have settled there, though they may not have established separate communities there.

I never claimed that the Belinfante family was among the first Sephardic refugee families to have settled in Holland or that it was known to Menasseh ben Israel or Spinoza. The family's record of over a hundred years of bookselling, printing, publishing, and other intellectual or artistic activities is nevertheless worthy of mention.

I referred to the adoption of a godfather's family name, on conversion to Christianity, as only one of the many possible reasons for the choice of a non-Jewish family name. Some years ago a member of Lisbon's Espirito Santo family of bankers told me the explanation of his name which I gave in my article.

Space limitations prevent me from answering Professor Salomon in any more detail, but I hope the above will suffice. I am grateful to Joseph A. Hasson for his interesting information about his mother's family and about the distinguished career of Jacob Nuñez Cardozo. When I referred disparagingly to the intellectual record of 19th-century America's Sephardic elite, I was concerned mainly with Stephen Birmingham's uninspiring chronicle of its intellectual activity. Nor did I really "harp on aristocracy," as Stephen Birmingham does in *The Grandees*; I only tried to prove that most of the leading Jewish families of Spain sought refuge in the Moslem world and that many claims to aristocratic origins by Sephardim of the Christian West are quite unfounded.

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I wish to thank Julius Frank, Paul Silverstone, and Joseph B. Russell for their comments. My reference to Georg Brandes, however, was intentionally misleading, as a tongue-in-cheek illustration of the kind of confusion which can arise if one assumes all too readily that all persons who happen to bear or adopt the same family name must somehow be related. Brandes exists nevertheless as a Jewish family name and may well be a Germanic corruption of a Portuguese name, just as Peretz, in Rumania and Poland, was a Slavic spelling of the Spanish name Perez.

To Senhora Maria Amélia de Azevedo Pinto, the distinguished editor of Portugal's leading literary and historical monthly, I am particularly grateful for the detailed information that she supplies on the origin of the name Brandon and of the English family which briefly bore the title, Duke of Suffolk.

Making Communities

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I believe, with Sonya Rudikoff ["Family Fever Chart" Oct. 1971], that "all the engaged girls composing their own marriage services" are not about to believe that they are entering into some form which is doomed to failure, nor do I think that those "numerous people in many countries who live in families, who bring up children expecting to live in families, who find family life essential, even rewarding" are about to cease doing that. When Miss Rudikoff asks, on the other hand, "Whom will they [the children] see?" in the future takeover by communes of the suburban living room, playroom, dining room, study, and library, she answers herself, "teachers, counselors, and day-care assistants, obviously." In my experience, these are precisely the adults children see now and often they are the only adults with whom many children have whatever meaningful contact they are going to have with adults.

The suburban home, as Miss Rudikoff describes it, contains a library. What books are in this library? What scholar now frequents the "study"? Is reading conceived of as a worthwhile occupation beyond the execution of assignments extended to children by teachers to earn marks and/or diplomas? What about the construction of these suburban homes? Miss Rudikoff does not think they can house communes adequately. Do they now house families well? Could three generations, or four, lead any sort of meaningful existence "out there"? Where is father all day? What does mother do there? Where are the children, indeed? . . .

"In an atmosphere of new relationships and self-discoveries," Miss Rudikoff states, "it becomes ominously clear that very little will be done to preserve or defend relationships which already exist or people already in specific situations. . . ." She fears, further, that, "not much effort will be made to repair damaged families or damaging relationships." Moreover, "people intent upon freeing their own instinctual lives are not always alert to the needs of others in different situations; indeed, it is the needs of others they are often fighting." It seems to me that Miss Rudikoff is holding onto something as a good which even she sees in essentially destructive terms. When Laing and Cooper on the other hand identify the family as "the ultimate trap of non-meeting" they are at least hoping for something better. For myself, I believe that the individual who has engineered his own escape is in a place where he can be aware of the needs of others; he does not need to use so much of his energy just to keep going.

Miss Rudikoff bemoans the fact that there are today children but no marriages. But perhaps what we are witnessing is that many women are bearing their babies, and saying so, even if they are not married. No "hush, hush" for them. Surely the incidence of illegitimacy is ages old, although certainly, from a medical history point of view at least, it is better for a child to know who the biological father and mother are just in case something goes wrong medically. We make an attempt, still, to simulate "family." Our language sets the terms: man, woman, boy, girl. In society they become father, mother, son, daughter; a family.

Miss Rudikoff, in pleading for temperance, eloquently asks, "Is it really a choice between family and commune?" and then lists "invented communities" which developed in this country, in the absence of large ancient families. In perusing the list, the following notion strikes me, one must work to be in a labor union, be wealthy to belong to a club, adept at skating, singing, or tennis, believe in "charity," have graduated from college, be a professional, like secrets, children, poker, be religious, political, civic-minded, like libraries, museums, be able to play bridge, act a little, or dance, have a car, have children and a husband or wife, as it were, in order to participate fully in these "ancillary activities and connections which are not the family"; one must, indeed, be either married and/or gainfully employed, all within the context of the ongoing society.

HELEN DUBERSTEIN
New York City

SONYA RUDIKOFF writes:

I am not sure I can do justice to Helen Duberstein's responses without following them into another article. Let me say, though, that I'm puzzled by her remarks about the social space between family and commune. Obviously, my list of "ancillary activities" was random, not exhaustive. The point of listing them at all was to question the validity of the bleak landscape offered by Laing and others.

Self-realization, believed in passionately, may blind the observer to the varied and numerous forms of self-realization which are already being pursued by countless people whose impulses are no less strong merely because they find reward in those activities I listed.

But does Helen Duberstein really think that one must be rich, married, educated, employed, etc. to be involved in activities and relationships other than the family? I can't imagine what sort of group she is thinking of—the FFV? the DAR? the Holland Society? the Racquet Club? the Phi Beta Kappa Society? But of course accuracy demands that other groups be added—the Court St. Theresa, the Elks, the Y, the Borough Council, the Stanley party, the Soroptomist clubs, the "young adult choirs," the "friendship clubs," as well as the American Anthropological Association, and the American Society of Civil Engineers, altar guilds and *Arbeiter Rings*, lodges, welfare mothers' groups, the Harmonie Club, and the people who used to meet at the Cedar Bar or Max's Kansas City.

In the face of all this reality, and a lot more, to insist on some other, truer, form of "meeting" seems to me notional and risky

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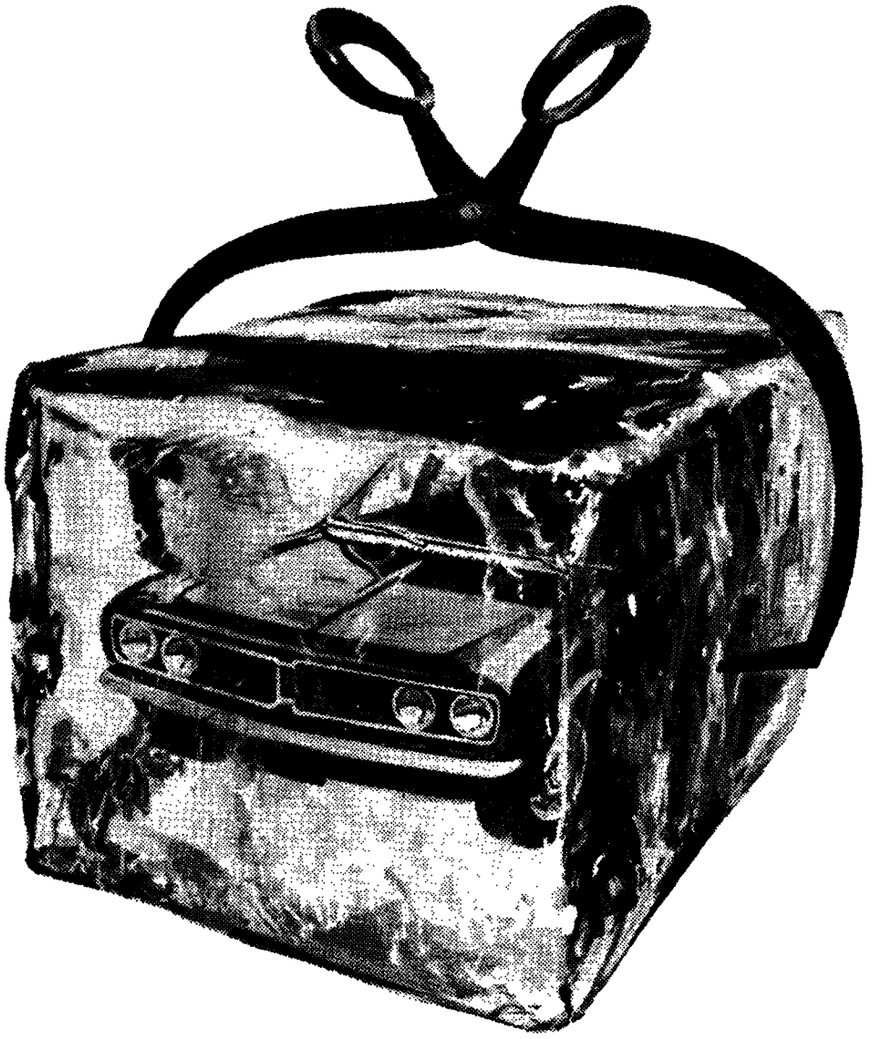

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The Fall of Europe?

Walter Laqueur

I

NEVER in its history has Europe suffered from so large and perceptible a discrepancy between economic strength on the one hand, and political and military impotence on the other. It is true that economic predictions for 1972 are not too sanguine and that Britain for instance is still in the throes of a severe economic crisis, but the foreign visitor would be hard put to discover signs of it in the streets of London or elsewhere. Italy's economy has taken a downward turn, but a traveler crossing from Italy into Switzerland, or the other way around, would not observe a great difference in prices or in the standard of living on the two sides of the line. A heated debate recently held on French television between a leading Gaullist and the new Secretary General of the French Communist party focused on the issue of whether the average French income has trebled (as the Gaullist claimed) or only doubled (according to the Communist thesis) in the last two decades.

On paper, the new Europe is a major world power: with a total population of 250 million, a combined GNP of some $640 billion (about two-thirds of the American GNP and considerably larger than that of the Communist bloc), it accounts for some 40 per cent of world trade. But there is something profoundly askew about this continent which for the past twenty-five years has lived on borrowed time, incapable of mustering sufficient strength to overcome national particularism and establish some form of political unity. Europe now finds itself in a perilous political and military situation. It is usually said that 1973 will be the European year of decision, when the general elections that are scheduled to be held in France, West Germany, and Italy will produce new governments, armed with a mandate to engage in more decisive and far-reaching policies. Yet even if all should go well from this point of view in 1973, Europe will still find itself only at the start of a long-drawn-out march toward political unity, and if that march is not undertaken, it is doubtful whether even the Common Market will manage to survive.

In recent days there has been a great deal of movement in European politics. Only a few months ago the entire Continent was agitated over the issue of Britain's entry into the European Economic Community, but by early October the debate had fizzled out even in Britain itself, where the issue had been regarded as the gravest the nation had to decide upon in this century. When, on October 28, the House of Commons finally voted to join the Common Market, the rest of Europe hardly noticed, so many more important problems having intervened and taken precedence: Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, the impact of America's new economic policies, the Soviet drive for a European Security Conference. Still, had the vote on October 28 gone *against* joining the Market, it would have meant not just the further decline of Britain but very probably the beginning of the end for Europe as a whole.

The debate over Britain's entry into the EEC is closely connected with the other problems facing Europe. West Germany's growing independence, both in economic matters and in areas of foreign policy, contributed decisively to Pompidou's decision to make British entry possible. To put it in somewhat oversimplified terms, whereas in the 50's and 60's the French needed West Germany as a counterweight to British influence, in the 70's Britain herself has become for France the counterweight to West Germany. Moreover, the French, notwithstanding official declarations, now share British skepticism with regard to Soviet intentions in Europe. In view of the near certainty of American troop reductions in the years ahead, it has become clear to the French government that only a common defense policy can prevent what is now commonly referred to as the Finlandization of Europe. In this respect, as in others, the pendulum has swung far since the era of Charles de Gaulle.

Though Parliament voted in favor of entry, the majority of Englishmen were against joining Europe. In this sense the decision was undemocratic, but before drawing alarming conclusions from

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this fact one should bear in mind that, according to recent polls, 77 per cent of the British electorate would also vote in favor of restoring capital punishment, and in addition would no doubt have stopped non-white immigration into Britain long ago. The opposition to joining the EEC consisted of a strange assortment of extreme right-wing Tories and extreme left-wing Labourites, both of which groups exploited all the free-floating conservatism, fear, distrust, envy, and xenophobia abroad in British society. For once Bernadette Devlin and Ian Paisley were on the same side of the barricade.

One of the basic arguments employed by left-wing critics was that British social services would suffer as a result of entry into the EEC. The Welfare State and the National Health Service have been the pride of Britain for several decades. What is less well known is that all the European Community countries have overtaken Britain and now spend a higher proportion of their GNP on social welfare. In absolute terms the discrepancy is even more striking: Britain spends $285 per person per annum, West Germany $507; a British worker gets between 16 and 20 paid holidays a year, an Italian worker between 29 and 47. No European government spends less on housing than Britain does, and France spends almost three times more. Family allowances on the Continent are more than double Britain's.

But, opponents argued, the Common Market was inward-looking, parochial, oblivious of its duty to the countries of the "Third World." Here too a closer look reveals that every European country contributes at least as much as Britain to the Third World, and many contribute more. The Common Market, these critics went on, is right-wing, reactionary, dominated by the supercartels. This argument may have had some force five years ago, but West Germany, the most powerful European country, today has—what Britain does not—a socialist-dominated government; Social Democrats are also represented in the Italian government, as well as in Benelux. But, still another group of critics said, Britain is likely to lose the Commonwealth, or the special relationship with the United States, or above all its sovereignty, the time-honored traditions that have always set England apart from Europe. The truth is, however, that the Commonwealth has for a long time been a fiction, the special relationship with America was lost years ago, and the idea of British "apartness" did not even come into being until the 19th century.

THE economic argument (non-Communist variety) against entry can be summarized under two headings: (a) the scheme would not work; and (b) the price of Britain's entry was too high. It would not work because British industry, being outdated, poorly managed, and strike-ridden, cannot compete any longer with the rest of the world. For this reason Britain would not be in a position to exploit the economic advantages of the Common Market (the availability of a wider market, lower tariffs against industrial goods, etc.). There is no denying that this is a real consideration. But even assuming, on the basis of the defeatist argument, that Britain is destined to become Europe's depressed area, a second Ulster, the country would still probably be better off inside the European community than out in the cold. For, once inside, it can count on the help of the other members. The real nub of the matter is the price of Britain's entry, estimated by the government at $250 million in 1973 and rising to twice that sum in 1977. Will not this outlay devastate the country's recently-restored balance-of-payments position and thus inhibit economic growth? Why should Britain support the Common Market agricultural policy which, whatever its original intentions, has done nothing but subsidize inefficient farming at a ruinously high cost? Will not the British housewife end up paying the price of British entry into the Market?

There does seem to be general agreement that food prices in Britain are bound to rise substantially once entry into the Common Market is effected, though why this should be so is not altogether clear. During a recent visit to the Continent I found that, butter aside, food prices in France, Switzerland, and Italy are more or less the same as in Britain: fruit and vegetables are a bit cheaper, meat is a little more expensive but of better quality. It is taken for granted that whereas the benefits of having joined will not be felt for a long time, the toll, in the form of higher food prices, will make itself felt almost immediately. Maybe so, but on the other hand an increase of even a half of one per cent in Britain's growth rate would more than cover the membership fee. And since exports will unquestionably increase as a result of the merger, the inordinate amount of time being wasted in the debate over the future price of butter already seems a little ridiculous.

The Tory campaign in favor of joining was helped along by the fact that the Labour party had only two years earlier favored British entry into the EEC on conditions that were certainly no better than those finally obtained by Prime Minister Heath. If anything, the Conservatives were hampered by a lack of enthusiasm in their own ranks; their new Europeanism, however loudly proclaimed, is limited in scope and not altogether convincing. Certainly the propaganda put out by the Conservative Central Office in defense of joining Europe would be disquieting to anyone who regards Europe as something other than a free trade zone, an economic convenience. One pamphlet, in trying to allay public fears of a "faceless bureaucracy" and a reduction in the prerogatives of Parliament and the Queen, noted

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comfortingly that there "has been no progress yet toward closer political unity," and that there was little likelihood of any pooling of sovereignty in the foreseeable future.

This argument is self-defeating because the case for Britain's entry rests in the last resort precisely on political, not economic, premises. The real issue is not the price of butter and sugar, not even the rate of growth, but the simple viability of the various countries of Western Europe. Taken one by one these countries do not count for anything politically, they are defenseless militarily, and they are economically highly vulnerable. European unity is the only way to overcome these weaknesses and to prevent the suicidal infighting which has so far in this century caused two world wars. In a recent article, Andrew Shonfield rightly complained about the apparent lack of concern with international relations manifest in the British debate over the Common Market. For if a slowdown should occur in the growth of international trade in the years to come, would there not be an overwhelming temptation for individual European nations to seize short-term advantages at the expense of other nations, unless a firmly established framework existed to contain and regulate economic tensions? The same goes, *a fortiori*, for the recrudescence of violent nationalism in any European country. Seen in this light, the trouble with the Common Market is not that it has moved too far and too fast toward supranationality, but that, on the contrary, movement in that direction has been agonizingly slow.

It is of course quite possible that political and military cooperation in Western Europe will proceed independently of economic development. In a press conference in early 1971, President Pompidou ridiculed the idea of Europe as a third force in world politics. But the fact of American disengagement from Europe, combined with traditional distrust of Soviet intentions and the fear of a deal between the two superpowers at Europe's expense, may well cause a quickening in the pace of cooperation outside the economic field. The political argument for British entry seems so overwhelming on the face of it that future generations will no doubt be puzzled that it took so long to accept the obvious and that England had to be pulled into Europe kicking and screaming. The cost of joining may be high, but the cost of not joining would in the long run be insupportable.

II

THE course of Soviet-German talks in recent months highlights the dilemmas involved in the current phase of European politics. For more than two decades Germany was the main battlefield of East-West confrontation in Europe. It is clear in retrospect that the official German attitude was too rigid; Bonn should have accepted long ago, unilaterally if necessary, such consequences of World War II as the Oder-Neisse line, and it should have renounced the Munich agreement of 1938. Instead of insisting on the Hallstein Doctrine (threatening to break with all countries recognizing East Germany) it should have put up with the fact that an East German state had come into being and would not disappear in the foreseeable future. It was argued for too long that for domestic reasons—the opposition mounted by refugee organizations—any accommodation with the East would have suicidal consequences for the party in power.

But if it was not really necessary to wait until the great coalition came into being in late 1966 for an initiative in German *Ostpolitik*, it is also true that up until that time the Soviet Union continued to threaten West Germany with military intervention (on the basis of paragraphs 53 and 107 of the UN charter) and had launched a massive propaganda attack (with accusations of "neo-Nazism," revanchism, etc.) against Bonn. Not until the spring of 1969, when the Soviet diplomatic offensive aimed at the establishment of a European Security Conference was stepped up, did hints emerge that the Russians were willing to engage in serious negotiations. This coincided with the advent to power in Bonn of a new government; when Willy Brandt became chancellor in September 1969 he devoted much of his energy to the discussions which led to the Soviet-German treaty of August 1970. This treaty, very broadly speaking, envisaged closer relations between the two countries on the basis of the recognition of the status quo in Europe. But it was to come into force, as the Germans insisted with full NATO support, only after a satisfactory solution had been found for the thorny Berlin issue; and this finally occurred in August 1971.

There is some promise in the new German *Ostpolitik*, and there are many dangers. Brandt can rightly claim that he did only what was in the long run inevitable, and what his predecessors, lacking courage and foresight, had failed to do—that is, to recognize, *de jure*, that Germany had lost the war. He can claim furthermore to have defused a potentially dangerous situation. West Germany is no longer the main villain of Soviet foreign policy; on the contrary, Brandt was praised in almost extravagant terms by Brezhnev in the latter's recent talks with Tito. This is a far cry from the past situation and it is only human for the architects of the *Ostpolitik* to believe that—far from having given anything away—they have restored to their country ("an economic giant but a political dwarf") much greater freedom of maneuver than anybody would have dreamed of even a year ago. Once the outcast, the pariah of European politics, Germany has

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again become a respected member of the family of nations in East and West alike.

Yet West Germany may one day have to pay a heavy price for these achievements. However often Brandt and Scheel may profess their loyalty to their Western allies, there is a great deal of free-floating distrust in Europe of Germany's re-emergence as a leading power. Some of this apprehensiveness is exaggerated if not downright hysterical; Brandt and his colleagues are good Europeans and they have had too many dealings with the Communists in their own lifetime to join a Popular Front on the interstate level, as a few commentators have implied they might. But the distrust persists; the recent French-British rapprochement was caused at least partly, as noted above, by French fears of Germany's growing role in Europe.

Potentially more dangerous than these relatively harmless rivalries, however, is the general climate of make-believe concerning Soviet intentions to which Brandt and his colleagues have succumbed and also contributed. The German Social Democrats may in fact have taken their stand on a slippery slope. For if Brandt and his government fail to live up to Soviet expectations in the political and economic fields, the Soviets will not hesitate to bring strong pressure to bear. Brandt realizes that but for a militarily credible American presence in Europe his deal with the Russians is bound to turn sour; his government has been among those protesting most loudly against any American troop reductions. But at the same time the *Ostpolitik* has given invaluable ammunition to American Senators and Congressmen who favor troop withdrawal below the point of credibility. After all, U.S. troops were kept in Europe mainly to defend Germany against Soviet encroachments; if Germany has reached an agreement with Russia which supposedly guarantees its security, what further need can there be for an American presence? According to a public opinion poll taken a few days after Brandt received the Nobel Peace Prize, 50 per cent of the German people now favor neutrality and only 38 per cent support the Western alliance; why should they be prevented from having it their own way? Brandt knows of course that neutrality is just not practical so far as Germany is concerned, and that, the balance of power in Europe being what it is, the only alternatives are either close collaboration with the West or gradual absorption into the Soviet sphere of influence. But he has already to some degree fallen captive to the illusions nursed by too much loose talk concerning Soviet-German rapprochement.*

III

THE signing of the agreement on Berlin has been seen by some as an official acknowledgment, so to speak, that the postwar era is over. But periodization is an enterprise of dubious value in the best of times, and these are not the best of times. When, for example, did the previous postwar era end? The question is of course unanswerable. In one sense it ended in 1923, in another it lasted until the outbreak of World War II. With equal justice, it can be claimed that the second postwar period ended in 1948-9, when the European economy had once again attained its pre-war levels and the location of the Iron Curtain was fixed. Yet most of the problems created by the war remained unsolved. As a consequence of World War II the balance of power in Europe underwent a radical shift; the resulting situation has continued in force despite years of East-West dialogue, diplomatic activity, security conferences, unilateral and multilateral talks, and no end of new schemes, ideas, and approaches. In other words, to a very real extent the postwar era is *not* over: Europe remains divided, the Soviet Union is the dominant military power, and but for the military alliance between Western Europe and the United States it would be the dominant political power as well. Such are the harsh facts, and no new formulas, however ingenious, no theoretical legerdemain, can make them disappear.

The age of dialogue, we are told, has replaced the age of confrontation. This is only partly true. Western Europe no longer fears a Soviet invasion, but on the other hand neither the fundamental assumptions nor the political aspirations of the Soviet Union have changed. It is the age of détente—not, unfortunately, a détente that signals real peace and security, but a détente in the more narrow meaning of a "period that succeeds a period of crisis in the Cold War."† For European security since the end of the war has rested not on dialogues and mutual understanding but on the existence of a certain balance of military power, and this balance, never complete or perfect, has in recent years been radically upset.

The facts are not in dispute: the Soviet Union and its allies now have three times as many tanks in Europe as does NATO, and 3,500 more tactical aircraft. From 1962 to 1968 American forces in Europe were reduced from 462,000 to 300,000, whereas the number of Soviet divisions has grown during the last four years from 26 to 31. The number of American ICBM's has remained static since 1967 at 1,054, while during the same period the number of Soviet missiles has almost doubled,

* To provide but one example, Brandt's Foreign Minister declared in an interview in late November that "structural changes inside the Soviet Union in recent years" could provide a good basis for a further reduction of tension. Even Communists outside the Soviet Union have been hard put to discover the presence of any such "structural changes."

† Philip Windsor, *Germany and the Management of Détente*, London, 1971.

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and now stands at 1,500.* The build-up of the Soviet fleet is well publicized and need not be described in detail. In sum, between 1967 and 1970 the military expenditures of NATO decreased by ten billion dollars, those of the Warsaw Pact countries rose by five billion. The Soviet Union now spends two to three times more per capita than NATO on military affairs.

These facts, to repeat, are not in dispute. What is at issue is their significance. Thus, for example, it has been said that they are of no great political consequence: the Soviet Union is too engrossed with its allies and with domestic problems to desire any further expansion. All the Russians need in Europe—at any rate so long as the conflict with China continues—is security and recognition of the status quo. Having acquired the necessary strategic parity with the United States, the Soviet Union is unlikely to engage in a ruinous arms race in order to gain a superiority which, in the age of modern nuclear warfare, might well prove specious. On the contrary, proponents of this line of reasoning find much evidence that the Soviet Union wishes to expand trade relations with the West, and they suggest that the West make the most of the situation and work for a *modus vivendi* in Europe that will help establish a climate of mutual trust and security.

The argument is alluring but many of the premises on which it is based are debatable, and some are manifestly wrong. First, the Soviet military build-up is by now well in excess of what can be reasonably considered essential for Soviet security in Europe. Second, and more important, the argument rests on the assumption that the Soviet Union (like the United States) is now a status quo power. This is simply not the case, and those who think it is are merely succumbing to the escapism which these days pervades political thinking in the United States and Western Europe alike.

True, Chinese pressure may induce the Kremlin to make certain concessions—on SALT, for instance—and as a short-term goal the Russians do also wish closer economic ties with Europe. But beyond this, the Soviet Union has more ambitious plans of which it has never made a secret. As the greatest European power it aspires to political, economic, and military hegemony, and it hopes to achieve this goal by inducing Western Europe to relax its political cohesiveness and military vigilance, by encouraging an accelerated program of American disengagement, and by preventing all moves toward closer political and military cooperation or integration among European countries.†

THE main instrument of Soviet foreign policy in Europe in recent years has been the demand for the establishment of a European Security Conference.** The basic concept dates back a long time, having made its first appearance in 1954-5 as part of the Soviet plan to prevent the consolidation of NATO in Europe. When this failed, various schemes for disengagement were introduced (such as the Rapacki plan), all of which were widely discussed but in the end discarded by the West because they were thought to contain no elements which would have contributed to real security in Europe. The Soviet aim all along was to dissolve both NATO and the Warsaw Pact and to create something like a European co-prosperity sphere. But the scheme was too crude, the lack of symmetry all too apparent: the Communist countries of Eastern Europe were tied together by bilateral defense agreements which would have remained in force, whereas Western Europe had no such arrangement. Furthermore, if hostilities broke out, American forces would have had to cross the Atlantic, while Soviet divisions merely would have had to move two hundred miles eastward.

Gradually the scheme became more sophisticated: in July 1966 the Warsaw Pact leaders issued a declaration on peace and security in Europe which included some concrete proposals. But the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia two years later put an end, temporarily at least, to negotiations. It was only in October 1969 that talks began in earnest on an agenda proposed by the Soviets "to insure European security, to renounce the use or threat of force in mutual relations, to expand commercial, economic, scientific-technical, and cultural relations for the purpose of developing political cooperation among European states."

By this time the project had begun to make a more solid and thoughtful impression. Skeptics still argued that, given the character of the Soviet regime, vague talk about the renunciation of the use or threat of force lacked credibility. Moreover, since both the Soviet Union and the West European countries were already signatories to a declaration to the same effect—the United Nations Charter—what was to be gained by affirming these principles yet another time? As for expanding trade relations, the Soviet Union's interest in this matter was never in doubt; the Russians badly needed (and need) Western computers and other modern equipment. Cultural relations, the free flow of people and ideas across international borders, posed a more problematical issue, rais-

* The impact of nuclear parity has been discussed in considerable detail in Walter Slocombe's recent study, *The Political Implications of Strategic Parity*, London, 1971.

† Michael Palmer, *The Prospects for a European Security Conference*, London, 1971, p. 18.

** Several recent studies analyze Soviet policy on this matter in detail: Karl Birnbaum, *Peace in Europe*, London, 1970; "Europe and America in the 1970's," *Adelphi Papers 70/71*, London, 1971; Hans Peter Schwarz, ed., *Europäische Sicherheits Konferenz*, Opladen, 1970; Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Power and Europe*, Baltimore, 1970.

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ing, in the Soviets' view, the possibility of ideological infection, of "peaceful invasion." Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders have stressed time and time again (most recently at the 24th Party Congress) that there can be no coexistence in the ideological sphere. This raised the old problem which has bedeviled East-West relations for so long: if Soviet doctrine does not in the long run envisage coexistence with political systems differing from its own, how can anyone be expected to take seriously the constant Soviet invocation of an era of "mutual trust and security"?

Despite all these reservations and other, procedural, misgivings, NATO at its meetings in Reykjavik, Lisbon, and Rome (May 1970) decided to take up the Soviet suggestions and explore them further. The NATO Council made its participation conditional on the further improvement of the situation in Central Europe. Such improvement appeared to be rapidly forthcoming: with the Soviet-German treaty, the Berlin agreement, the prospects for further advance in the SALT talks, and Soviet hints concerning discussions on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR), it was decided last October to delegate Mario Brosio, the outgoing NATO Secretary, to explore Soviet intentions in Moscow.

The West has been strongly urged to participate in the European Security Conference, not only by the Soviets but by East European leaders as well. The interest of some of the latter is obvious: while the Soviets negotiate, any military initiative against Rumania and Yugoslavia, for example, would be self-defeating. Since the talks would last a long time, perhaps several years, Rumania and Yugoslavia would gain, at the very least, a breathing space. Other East European leaders, notably in Poland and Hungary, think that they, too, would gain more freedom as a result of ESC, but the position of these particular states would more likely worsen; for the Soviet Union, fearing that its allies might go too far toward rapprochement with the West, would be inclined to tighten rather than loosen its hold over them.

ANOTHER group of lobbyists for the ESC is made up of politicians from neutral countries. Some of these sincerely desire to act as mediators and bridge-builders; with others ulterior motives may be at work. Not much need be said about Finland in this context; in view of its relationship with Russia it cannot very well refrain from supporting its powerful neighbor. Swedish foreign policy has pursued a middle line between West and East which, if not morally reprehensible (as the late John Foster Dulles claimed), does not reflect either superior moral courage or wisdom: but for the existence of a balance of power in Europe, Sweden could not afford to be neutral. There is a tendency in Sweden to forget its unfortunate record of dealings with Nazi Germany between 1938 and 1944; there may or may not be lessons to be drawn from that record for the present time, but it might be hoped that study of the period would nevertheless serve to curb the Swedish habit of moralizing about situations involving the security of others.

The British and French attitude has been one of "polite reserve," in the words of one observer, though not necessarily for the same reason. The French prefer bilateral talks to mass circuses; de Gaulle certainly would not have approved of a scheme as lacking in substance as this one. In most British eyes, American disengagement from Europe seems likely to produce in the long run a situation more dangerous to peace than the present state of affairs. In Italy, Norway, and Denmark, on the other hand, the idea of ESC has found a considerably more friendly reception. The Italian government, in its insistence on responding to the Soviet initiative, has taken account of the fact that one-third of Italy's electorate votes regularly for parties which oppose NATO and which, in contrast to the situation in France, constitute a very real political factor. These parties are eager to find compromise formulas in their opening to the Left—and it is far easier to find them in matters of foreign policy than in matters of domestic policy. "Neutralism" is an important factor in Norway and Denmark as well; recent elections in both countries saw an increase of support for anti-NATO parties. While these two governments in general exhibit an awareness of just to whom it is they owe their independence, public opinion is not so clear on this point. Soviet intimidation too has had a certain effect here; Russia has tried hard, and not entirely unsuccessfully, to demonstrate that it is the strongest military power in the area and that American help cannot be relied upon.

The advocates of ESC in Western Europe maintain that dialogue with the East, even if limited at first to areas like oceanography and the environment, will gradually gather momentum and lead to an improvement in the general political climate. Some of the main obstacles toward such dialogue were removed by Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. Brezhnev's announced approval last summer of the NATO proposals for balanced troop reductions seemed yet another step in the right direction. It is, however, by no means certain that the Soviet leadership has accepted the Western demand that troop reductions be asymmetrical (because the conventional forces of Western Europe are so much weaker than those of the East). Even so, the signals from Moscow encouraged President Nixon and other Western leaders to probe Soviet intentions further.

Nevertheless, it is not altogether certain that a conference is what the Russians really want. It is obviously in their interest to prolong the present

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"talks about talks" for as long as possible; a conference that is bound to reveal disagreement on the one issue that really matters, namely who is going to dominate Europe, would constitute an anti-climax after the present upsurge of expectations.

IT CAN be argued that the pessimism expressed here is unwarranted. To be sure, the resolutions of the last Soviet Party Congress mention the "consolidation and *extension* of the Soviet ['socialist'] order"—but why take at face value the ritual invocations of a basically conservative leadership that has no use for revolutionary fervor and no expansionist aims? The answer is that a regime need not be revolutionary in character to aim at expansion, provided the temptation is strong enough and the risks involved not too high. It may well be that Soviet leaders are willing to make certain concessions in order to achieve their principal aim in Europe—the removal of American forces. They do not, for instance, insist any longer on the exclusion of the United States from the proposed conference. Similarly, as the threat from China increases—more Soviet divisions are now stationed on the Chinese border than in Eastern Europe—it is not unthinkable that the Soviet Union may evince a willingness to engage in more meaningful talks with the West. And it is also not impossible that if this state of affairs were to last long enough, the Soviet Union would give up its more ambitious aims in Europe altogether.

But this optimistic outlook presupposes one of two conditions, neither of which unfortunately exists at present: the continuation of a strong American presence in Europe, or alternatively, the existence of a strong Western European defense community. So far as the first is concerned, domestic pressures in the U.S. for disengagement from Europe are no secret to the Soviets; and as for the second, nobody in Western Europe seems ready to shoulder the cost in money and manpower necessary to bring West European conventional forces up to a level roughly equal to that of the Warsaw Pact forces.

It would take a Soviet invasion of Rumania or Yugoslavia, or Soviet participation in a Middle Eastern war, to galvanize West European public opinion on this point. This the Russians of course know, and they will no doubt refrain in the near future from actions which may cause disquiet in the West. In the meantime, while the Russians greet unilateral American troop reductions and cuts in American defense spending with polite and reassuring professions of good will and peaceful intentions, we may be sure that they are not about to make any far-reaching concessions of their own.

In the face of all this, the only alternative would seem to be appeasement or, in more refined language, "accommodation." Whatever the term used, the likely result will be the gradual growth of Soviet power in Europe. At present, there are not many outright advocates of Soviet hegemony in Europe, even among the Communist parties. But if the American retreat continues and if Western Europe proves incapable of strengthening its own defenses fairly rapidly, the argument will increasingly be heard that accommodation with the Russians, being inevitable, should be sought sooner rather than later.

What would Soviet hegemony mean in practical terms? Certainly not the physical occupation of Western Europe. Europe would be expected, however, to help with the economic development of the Eastern bloc. The Soviet Union would not necessarily insist on the inclusion of Communists in every European government, but (as in Finland) it would surely demand that untrustworthy political leaders or parties be excluded from positions of power and influence, and it would expect a ban on any criticism of Soviet policies. To a limited extent it is possible to discern something of this pattern already emerging. Soviet leaders have declared unequivocally that they would take it as a threat to peace if the German *Bundestag* should fail to ratify the Soviet-German treaty. Broadcasting stations critical of Soviet policy have been called a danger to European security and Soviet demands have been issued for their removal from the air; needless to say, no such restrictions have been suggested with regard to Soviet broadcasts. Similarly, the Soviet Union regards interference with the activities of its intelligence agents in Western Europe as a hostile act; protests are brushed aside or dismissed as cold-war propaganda or even a threat to peace. (After the recent expulsion of some ninety Soviet agents from London, it was sadly observed in Bonn and Paris that such drastic action would now be almost unthinkable in any other European capital.)

There is still a chance that out of the present confusion a new European defense community will emerge, based on Anglo-French nuclear cooperation and the combined conventional forces of ten European countries. Attempts to establish a European defense force date back to the early 1950's; they were voted down by the French National Assembly while Pierre Mendès-France was Prime Minister and they failed to kindle much enthusiasm in any of the other countries in question. For twenty years Europe lay under the American nuclear guarantee, and by a stroke of unique good fortune resulting from the Soviet conflict with China, the Continent has now received a second respite. No one knows how long this breathing space will last, or indeed whether it can be successfully exploited. Pooling their resources, the West European countries could muster a sum total of $23 billion by way of a military budget (as against the $63 billion spent by the Warsaw Pact), and a force of about two million

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men and 300 combat vessels. Still, if one takes into account the Soviet Union's commitments in other parts of the world the overall picture is not as hopeless as it appears at first sight.

But would a European defense community be of any consequence without an independent nuclear deterrent? The immensely complex issue of Anglo-French nuclear cooperation has recently been analyzed in some detail by Ian Smart.* Britain has had much longer experience than France with nuclear weapons, whereas the French have made more progress in producing their own missiles. The French tactical nuclear artillery (Pluton) will be deployed in Germany later this year. The main obstacle is not, as is frequently thought, an economic one; Britain has spent less than 0.2 per cent of its GNP on strategic weapons, France about 0.6 per cent. France's progress has been hampered in recent years above all by certain technical difficulties which will, no doubt, be overcome in due course. But there are immense political problems. Should Germany and other European countries participate in this program? Leaders of the German CDU have in the past welcomed the concept of a British-French pool as an important step toward an all-European deterrent. But it is doubtful whether the present German government would risk incurring Soviet displeasure and thus the achievements, real and imaginary, of the *Ostpolitik* by making a financial contribution. Moreover, how credible would an Anglo-French deterrent be? In Smart's view, the only threat such a deterrent could pose would be the threat of retaliation either for a Warsaw Pact military action which could be held to endanger vital British or French interests, or for a strategic nuclear attack by the Soviet Union. "The former threat is one which entails suicide, the latter a blow from the grave." Nevertheless, a European capacity to retaliate, however small, would not be lightly dismissed by the Warsaw Pact countries.

Considerations of this nature will, of course, appear outdated and irrelevant (if not altogether heinous) to those who have decided to their satisfaction that the cold war has ended at long last and a new era of peace and cooperation is automatic and inevitable. But there is still a distinct danger that by unilateral concessions and disarmament those who strive for peace will undermine the very basis on which the prospects for peace and security in Europe rest—namely the ability of Europe to defend itself. A European Defense Organization could play a decisive role in bringing about a real détente. If, on the other hand, the Europeans put their trust in high-sounding but basically meaningless dialogues and security conferences, while at the same time failing to take adequate measures to insure their own defense, the outcome, short of a miracle, will be only too predictable.

* "Future Conditional: The Prospect for Anglo-French Nuclear Cooperation," *Adelphi Paper 78*, London, 1971.

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his home, he stashes pistols in bureau drawers, shotguns in the garage, rifles behind cabinets; at one point he searches the hood of his Cadillac for fingerprints left by someone who may have planted a bomb under the hood. Sometimes, though not very often, gangsters will display a rough movie-gangster wit, as in the case of one John "Cockeye" Dunn, a small-time waterfront hood who, upon hearing that he was sentenced to be executed at Sing Sing, declared that at least the electric chair would cure his piles. Perhaps no one relished this sort of thing—what can only be called traditional gangsterly behavior—more than Meyer Lansky, the subject of a recent study by Hank Messick.* Lansky, a quite untraditional type, is said by Mr. Messick always to have taken an amused view of Mafia shoot-ups and other such outlandish incidents, rather appreciating the way they have tended to take much of the pressure off his own much grander operations. And in fact, Lansky's view appears to be correct, for when Mr. Messick asked a Justice Department official why Justice under Robert Kennedy emphasized the Mafia, and not Lansky's National Crime Syndicate, as the main arm of organized crime in America, he was told: "The Mafia was small and handy. The feeling was the American people would buy it with its family relations and blood oaths a lot quicker than they could understand the complex Syndicate. You must remember, we wanted to get public support behind the drive on crime."

But over the years the official attacks upon organized crime in America have been uneven and the study of organized crime has itself been rather disorganized. As a discipline, it most closely resembles Kremlinology. In both fields, one works with an absolute minimum of factual material, and so extrapolation becomes nearly everything. In Kremlinology one draws certain deductions from, say, the absence of Boris Suslov from a photograph of the Soviet Central Committee; in the study of organized crime one draws similar deductions from, say, the presence of a Lansky lieutenant in Costa Rica. Are such deductions correct? Sometimes they are. Sometimes not. One learns only in retrospect.

One learns only in retrospect, of course, because the very nature of the game involves elaborate secrecy. Only now do we have a fairly firm sense of the history of organized crime in America; only now can events which seemed chaotic and confused when they first occurred be made to yield to a coherent and convincing narrative of who did what to whom, when, why, and with what consequences.

The first point to emerge in the narrative is that there were criminal gangs in America well before the Civil War. In his *American Notes,* Dickens described the section of Manhattan's Lower East Side called Five Points as "reeking everywhere with dirt and filth . . . hideous tenements which take their names from robbery and murder." Gangs with names like the Shirt Tails, the Plug Uglies, and the Dead Rabbits roamed the streets. After the Civil War, a gang calling itself the Whyos came into being and published a price list for potential customers, with services ranging from $2 for a bit of mussing up, to $10 for "nose and jaw broke," all the way up to $100 for "doing the job."

Similar gangs evolved in the immigrant neighborhoods of other large American cities. Generally their ethnic make-up could be relied upon to be mainly that of the newest arrivals to America—first the Irish, later the Jews and Italians. There were, to be sure, precedents for crime in the Old World countries from which these immigrants came: we know from Henry Mayhew about gangs in the underworld of Victorian England; from Isaac Babel about the Jewish ghetto gangsters in Odessa, who doubtless existed in the ghettos of other Eastern European cities as well; and in Western Sicily the tradition of the Mafia is said to go back as far as the 13th century. But one did not require much in the way of precedent to enter upon a life of crime in the New World, for crime, as Daniel Bell has pointed out, had long been an American way of life, a fairly well-traveled avenue of upward social mobility, before the parents of the better-known Jewish and Italian gangsters arrived in this country. Nor did crime need to have run in one's family to have presented itself as a serious career possibility. Al Capone's father was a barber in Brooklyn, and Meyer Lansky's father appears to have been a manual laborer.

Considered wholly outside the realm of moral judgment, they were a truly remarkable generation, these gangster sons of Jewish and Italian immigrants born around the turn of the century. Arnold Rothstein, Lucky Luciano, Johnny Torrio, Meyer Lansky—before they were through they would do for crime what the Rockefellers, Morgans, and Carnegies did for capitalism. They would take what had essentially been a cottage industry of independent operators and develop it, expand it, organize it, and make it, in Max Weber's sense of the term, "rational." And they would do this at a very early age. Capone was at the height of his power at twenty-nine, Lansky was a power even earlier, and Joseph Bonanno was made head of one of New York's five large Mafia families at the age of twenty-six. Their achievement required nerve and muscle and, not least, brains.

THE history of organized crime in America in this century can be divided into two main phases: the phase leading up to and including Prohibition and the phase since the repeal of Prohibition up to the present. In an offhand remark, Meyer Lansky, who has lived through both phases, perceived the chief difference between the

* *Lansky,* Putnam, 286 pp., $6.95.

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two when he characterized the earlier period as that in which "balls counted more than brains."

The dominant figure of the "Era of Balls" was indisputably Al Capone, and the capital city was Chicago. John Kobler, a professional writer of high competence, has recently written a biography of Capone,* and if Mr. Kobler's book is somewhat short on brilliance, it is long on documented fact and anecdote. It is quite a story, and not the least interesting thing about it is that where Capone's life and legend diverge, the life, as resurrected by Mr. Kobler's diligent research, is generally wilder, more absurd, and madder than the legend itself.

Take, for example, Capone's nickname, which in the press was always given as Scarface. Capone did have a scar on the left side of his face which ran four inches across the cheek, two inches in front of the left ear, two-and-a-half inches vertically down the jaw, and still another two-and-a-half inches under the ear on the neck. This piece of butchery was the souvenir of an inapposite remark Capone had made to the sister of a petty felon from Brooklyn named Frank Galluccio. Capone was badly scarred, all right, but no one of minimal sanity had enough nerve to call him by his press nickname to his face. Instead he was called "Snorky," slang of the day for "elegant." Elegant! Capone stood 5′ 10″ and weighed 255 pounds. He had a head with all the subtlety of contour of a cantaloupe; a face nearly obscene in its open and lubricious sensuality. Bedizened in diamonds—rings, stickpins, belt buckle—he would show up at the track in a sunburst yellow suit; in the courtroom he was done up in purple.

Capone's origins, in life and in crime itself, were humble enough. He was born in Brooklyn in 1899, the son of parents who were Neapolitan. As a boy he ran with the Italian street gangs of his neighborhood (Jewish and Irish gangs had their own respective turfs nearby). He seems to have had an ugly temper from his earliest years. At fourteen, and in the sixth grade at P.S. 113, he slugged a teacher when she reproved him for his truancy; this incident put an end to his formal education. In these years, too, he fell under the influence of John Torrio, a man seventeen years his senior and in the world of organized crime an avant-garde figure. Physically a small man, Torrio had no great taste for violence, but he had no great compunction against using it either. Capone, on the other hand, at least in the years of his adolescence, specialized in violence. A beefy kid who could hit like a truck and who was also good with a pistol, he appears to have been little more than a heavy.

"I looked on Johnny [Torrio] like my adviser and father," Capone remarked in middle age, "and the party who made it possible for me to get my start." This is certainly true enough. Capone's own early efforts to carve out a career for himself were a vast bungle. By the time he was twenty, he was already suspected of two murders and stood to be indicted for a third if a man he had mauled in a barroom brawl died in the hospital. John Torrio, meanwhile, had shifted his headquarters to Chicago, where he worked for an uncle, Big Jim Colisimo, nightclub owner and whoremaster *extraordinaire*. When Torrio invited Capone to join him in Chicago, Capone didn't wait for a second invitation; by this time married and the father of a son, he gathered up his family and came running.

Big Jim Colisimo was a vintage character. An opera buff and a man with a fetish for diamonds—he wore several rings, and had precious stones set into his belt, suspenders, garter buckles, tie, watch fob, cufflinks, and vest, and also carried a chamois bag filled with uncut stones—Colisimo had an annual income estimated at roughly $600,000, most of it from gambling, white slaving, and from his own chain of brothels and his nightclub, Colisimo's Café. The year Torrio brought Capone to Chicago, 1919, business was booming. Big Bill Thompson—one of whose later campaign slogans was "vote early and vote often"—was mayor, the Salvation Army and other independent evangelists made the city's brothels seem more enticing than they could ever hope to be in reality, and everyone involved in vice of any sort was doing very well indeed.

On January 17, 1920, a year after Capone's arrival in Chicago, the Volstead Act went into effect and Prohibition became law. This piece of ill-conceived legislated morality provided gangsters with an unprecedented opportunity for a great leap forward, and the more prescient gangsters, John Torrio among them, knew it. But Colisimo, recently remarried, was sluggish about moving into action on the bootleg front. Torrio, who had already worked up agreements with other gangsters to supply bootleg booze all over Chicago, seeing that his uncle had now become eminently dispensable, arranged to have him shot in the vestibule of his own nightclub. At the funeral, a brothel-keeper named Ike Bloom delivered the eulogy. "There wasn't a piker's hair on Big Jim's head," Bloom said. "He had what a lot of us haven't got—class."

With Colisimo dead, John Torrio's operation began rolling. Everything was set. The fix was in with the police and the politicians, the problems of distribution and manufacture of bootleg alcohol were solved without great fuss, and the city was divided up among rival gangs, usually organized along ethnic lines. The overriding difficulty, however, was characterological: the number of psychotics, not to speak of simple nuts, among Chicago gangsters ran inordinately high. For example, one Leland Varain, alias Louis Alterie, a member of the Dion O'Banion gang, which controlled the city's North Side, had

* *Capone*, Putnam, 409 pp., $8.95.

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so pronounced an obsession with blondes that when he discovered a woman he was traveling with had come by her blondness through peroxide, he threw her off the train. When another member of the O'Banion gang, a Jewish hood named Samuel J. "Nails" Morton, was thrown and kicked to death by a horse in Lincoln Park, the O'Banionites' reprisal took the form of breaking into the stable, stealing the horse, leading it to the exact spot on the bridal path where it had thrown Morton, and there pumping it full of bullets. Samuzza Amatuna, a member of the Genna gang, which controlled Chicago's South Side, owned more than two hundred monogrammed shirts, the laundering of which he entrusted to a local Chinese laundry. When the laundry scorched one of the shirts, Amatuna followed the horse-drawn laundry truck and he, too, plugged the horse.

It was in trying to force such men to abide by the intricate jurisdictional lines that Torrio had drawn up in order to take maximum advantage of Prohibition that a determined thug like Capone was useful. Hot, hungry, and physically fearless, Capone complemented the older and cooler Torrio nicely. So nicely, in fact, that Torrio offered to cut him in on 50 per cent of his bootleg business. As soon as he started making serious money, Capone, a good family man, brought his widowed mother and brothers and sister to Chicago, installing them in eight rooms on the second floor of his own home. By 1922, he was still not very well known outside the underworld, and the first time his name was mentioned in the press it was printed as "Alfred Caponi." In the meantime, a rare fever of reform, short-lived but running high, hit Chicago under the administration of a now-forgotten mayor named William E. Dever, causing Torrio and Capone to move their headquarters to Cicero, a suburban town adjoining Chicago to the west.

The decade that followed provided unprecedented peaks of violence, avarice, and vulgarity. The underworld became a mini-Kremlin—there were power plays everywhere, and the men who had gone to such extraordinary lengths to shoot horses now began shooting one another. Gang wars were only intermittently interrupted by outbreaks of peace. "We're making a shooting gallery out of a great business," Capone once complained. Yet he himself was not above the passions of the trigger. When a man in a Cicero bar was stupid enough to call him a "dago pimp," he squeezed off six rounds in the man's face. On another occasion, upon learning of a plot to betray him by three of his own entourage, he invited these men to dinner, after which he had them gagged and bound to their chairs with wire, and, baseball bat in hand, personally beat them to death.

In the gangster world, funerals were the chief social occasions of the day. Dion O'Banion, who owned a flower shop, provided Himalayas of flowers, and each gang felt obliged to outdo the next in the ornateness of the caskets it used to bury its deceased members. The great social event of 1925, however, was not a funeral but a wedding at which one of the Genna brothers married the sister of another underworld figure; the wedding cake weighed in at an even ton. But the trophy for the all-time vulgarity sweepstakes has to go to a bootlegger named Terry Druggan, who installed in his Gold Coast duplex a solid silver toilet seat engraved with his name.

After Dion O'Banion was killed in 1924 by two recent Sicilian immigrants hired by Capone and Torrio, things became too hot for Torrio, who soon announced his retirement from the Chicago scene. Capone was on his own. As a leader, he commanded loyalty and respect from underlings. He was a lavish giver of gifts, and paternalistic toward his men in the tradition of the Mafia dons, though, as Mr. Kobler points out, he was never himself a member of the Mafia. Above all, he was always one of the boys; he was a compulsive gambler and, family man though he might be, also a terrific whore-hound. "When a guy don't fall for a broad," he once remarked, "he's through."

DESPITE the murders he was personally responsible for, despite his involvement in vice and in the rackets (the take from his brothels alone was said to be $4 million annually), despite the fact that he could get no life insurance, rode in a $30,000 bulletproof limousine, and employed a food taster, there is reason to believe that Capone continued to think of himself as essentially a businessman. When he bought a mansion in Miami, he offered, in all seriousness, to join the local Rotary. He entertained such show-business figures as George Jessel, Joe E. Lewis, Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, and Harry Richman. (Richman, who wore flashy jewelry and always carried at least one $1,000 bill on him, was in the habit of getting held up with a fair regularity; to prevent this, Capone wrote a note announcing that Richman was a friend of his. When Richman was next held up he presented the note; his belongings were immediately returned and an apology offered.) At one point, Capone thought to hire Ivy Lee, the public-relations specialist who had done so much for John D. Rockefeller. He was on everyone's sucker list for charitable contributions, and he gave heavily.

In 1928, Big Bill Thompson decided to go after the Republican nomination for President of the United States. His ambition in this regard required that he solidify his national reputation by routing Capone out of Chicago. This involved extensive harassment of Capone's men, regular raids on his breweries, brothels, and gambling houses, and extreme pressure on Capone himself, which took the form of an unrelenting surveillance. Toward the end of the year Capone capitulated, announcing at a press conference that he was leaving Chicago for Florida. At this same press conference, he made clear his own view of

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his career. It turns out that he looked upon himself—and there is no reason to believe that he thought he was conning anyone—as a kind of public servant:

> I've been spending the best years of my life as a public benefactor. I've given people the light pleasures, shown them a good time. And all I get is abuse—the existence of a hunted man. I'm called a killer. Ninety per cent of the people of Cook County drink and gamble and my offense has been to furnish them with those amusements. Whatever else they may say, my booze has been good and my games have been on the square. Public service is my motto. I've always regarded it as a public service if people were given decent liquor and square games.

He was equally explicit when asked what a gangster thought about when he murdered another gangster in a gang war:

> Well, maybe he thinks that the law of self-defense, the way God looks at it, is a little broader than the lawbooks have it. Maybe it means killing a man who'd kill you if he saw you first. Maybe it means killing a man in defense of your business—the way you make the money to take care of your wife and child. I think it does. You can't blame me for thinking there's worse fellows in the world than me.

Taken together these two passages remain to this day the definitive gangster self-justification. To the question, Why do you do what you do?, the answer is, I'm only giving people what they want. To the question, Why does it involve killing?, the answer is, I'm only looking after my own.

Capone was eventually brought down—it would be going too far to say he was brought to justice—not because of the crudity of his methods, and not because he was a killer, but because he was what the newspapers call "good copy." In 1930, for example, the students of the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University voted him one of the year's ten "outstanding personages of the world . . . the characters that actually made history," along with Gandhi, Einstein, George Bernard Shaw, Admiral Byrd, and Henry Ford. When he arrived in his box at Washington Park for the running of the American Derby, the band struck up "This Is a Lonesome Town When You're Not Around." CAPONE PICKS CUBS TO WIN 1930 FLAG. . . . CAPONE DOESN'T GO TO CHURCH ON SUNDAYS. . . . this was the stuff of headlines. He had become synonymous with crime itself, and although the press tended to treat crime as a national sport of sorts, Capone was, in the dimension of his reputation, a living insult to legally constituted authority. He once told a reporter from the Chicago *Tribune*: "Nobody's really on the legit, when it comes down to cases, you know that." It is one thing to believe this, another to say it, and still a third to have it credited to you in print. Candor so raw eventually set no less a figure than the President of the United States on his neck. Herbert Hoover loosed a special Prohibition detail to wreck Capone financially, while agents of the Internal Revenue Service—Capone had never filed a tax return—would move in to finish the job by sending him to jail for tax evasion.

In 1931, Capone was sentenced to eleven years imprisonment, fined $50,000, and made to pay court costs of another $30,000. He was supposed to serve his time at Leavenworth, but a few years later he was shifted to the maximum security prison of Alcatraz. Capone had long before contracted syphilis, and in prison it worsened. (Capone, the fearless killer, was himself deathly afraid of hypodermic needles, and so all along had refused treatment for his venereal infection.) In 1939, partially paralyzed, he was transferred to the newly opened Federal Correction Institution at Terminal Island near Los Angeles. After the last of his fines had been paid, he was transferred again, this time to the U.S. Penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, and it was there, on November 16, 1939, that his wife and brother came to pick him up—to scrape him up, really, for he was by then, at forty, a totally shattered man. He lived eight more years, eventually dying in bed of the effects of a brain hemorrhage brought on by his irreversible case of neurosyphilitis. His last years were lived in a dark fog of incomprehension, with only occasional lapses into the false bright clarity of paranoia.

ALTHOUGH Al Capone was easily the best-known gangster of his own or any other time, he was in point of fact rather a parochial figure. While he made millions working the rich vein of Chicago, he never thought to expand his operations outside the fringes of that city, and even at the height of his power he never controlled more than a third of it. Capone was held in considerable respect by other gangsters around the nation, but he was not invited to attend what is now thought to have been the first meeting of organized crime on a national scale which took place in Cleveland in December 1928. The meeting was exclusively a Sicilian affair, and Capone, though he did not attend personally, was represented by Chicago mafiosi. Along with John Torrio, he did attend another such meeting, this one cutting across ethnic lines, held in Atlantic City in the spring of 1929. And during the Castellammarese War among rival factions of the New York Mafia families, Capone is said to have sent a lieutenant, one Paul Ricca, to inform the New Yorkers to settle their differences quickly or the boys from Chicago would enter the war and, Ricca is supposed to have said, "if it is necessary we will even employ airplanes, because those means are ready and concentrated in a specified place." Yet in the main Capone's interests were local—that is, Chicago-wide—in scope.

Nor was Capone much for modern financial maneuvers. In fact, according to Mr. Kobler, he never

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kept a bank account. Having an Old World distrust of banks, he paid cash for everything, from huge political payoffs to household items, which made it all the more difficult for the Internal Revenue agents to work up their case against him. What money Capone had that didn't go out for fixes, gifts, charity, and general high living, he kept in a trunk at the foot of his bed. In this and in his readiness for violence and his lack of scrupulousness about details (big ones, like never filing a tax return), Capone was almost quaintly antique. Indeed, during the time he was making his biggest splash, and right through the period of his crash, subtler criminal minds were at work, thinking larger thoughts and harboring grander ambitions.

Such a man was Meyer Lansky. Lansky was born in Grodno, Russia in 1902, three years after Al Capone, whom he has thus far survived for nearly a quarter of a century. He was brought to the United States, along with a brother and sister, in 1911. In America he went to the New York public schools through the eighth grade. Today he is fighting deportation proceedings in Israel, and has recently been indicted in the United States, along with three other men, for skimming $36 million off the top of profits from the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas.

Soon to be seventy, Lansky lived through the Capone "Era of Balls" and is usually conceded to be the major architect of the subsequent "Era of Brains." A small man (5′ 4½″ and under 140 pounds), Lansky bears more than a physical resemblance to John Torrio: neither man ever had any emotional need for violence, though neither had any moral squeamishness about calling it into play where he deemed it necessary; and each man was a poor customer for those services—whoring, gambling, drinking—upon which they both made their fortunes. Highly self-controlled, seemingly dispassionate yet burning with ambition, as personalities they were two cubes of very dry ice. What Torrio attempted, unsuccessfully, to achieve in Chicago—an organization of gangsters along jurisdictional lines as well as cutting across ethnic ties—Lansky would achieve nationally and, in part, internationally.

Lansky's first job out of school was working for a tool and die maker. He then went on to service stolen cars: removing the serial numbers, disguising their original appearance, souping up the motors, building in extra storage space for bootlegging. From here he went into the business of renting stolen cars to gangsters. With Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel, a friend acquired in adolescence, he next, according to Mr. Messick, went into contract killing; in this his operation was a forerunner of Murder, Inc., which was to become an internal policing force for those gangsters who stepped out of line. In all these youthful activities, Lansky was punctual, reliable, and altogether a man who could be depended upon to deliver the goods.

As a bootlegger, Lansky was not only a superior businessman but a consummate diplomat. In order to convoy contraband liquor out of Canada and the Bahamas, he forged alliances with gangsters in Boston, Cleveland, and other cities around the country. In this as in other matters Lansky showed himself to be wholly untainted by New York provincialism. Mr. Messick quotes him as telling Lucky Luciano in the 1920's: "We get the idea that New York is the world. It ain't. There's plenty of money and muscle out there in the sticks."

Lansky's true triumph as an organizer has been precisely a triumph over this sort of provincialism and over parochialism of any sort in the criminal world. Throughout his career he has been single-minded in the pursuit of material profit, which is perhaps the chief reason behind his contempt for the Mafia, with its strange notions of offended dignity, its self-defeating heroics, its penchant for vengeance at any cost, and its overall narrow view of the world. In the 1950's, many years after Lansky had successfully put together the National Crime Syndicate, the Mafia spirit continued to rear its parochial head. At one point, when the late Albert Anastasia attempted to move in on Lansky's gambling empire in Cuba, a meeting of Syndicate representatives ordered him out. Anastasia took it badly, threatening to remove the Mafia from the Syndicate. Other prominent Mafia dons, Vito Genovese and Gerardo Catena among them, pleased with the prosperity Lansky had brought, laughed at the prospect. According to Mr. Messick, in his rage Anastasia screamed out: "You bastards have sold yourselves to the Jews. The traditions of the Honored Society have been forgotten. The old days were bad, maybe, but at least we could hold up our heads in pride. We had respect then; now we're a bunch of fucking businessmen."

Lansky was able to convert such men into businessmen only by dint of patience, discipline, and the most extraordinary cunning. He was greatly aided in this endeavor by his relationship with Lucky Luciano. A Sicilian by birth, Luciano was a mafioso, but one who had passed well beyond the relatively primitive Mafia psychology and the code of behavior that went with it. Lansky and Luciano worked well together in their respective bootlegging ventures, and Lansky also had once rescued Luciano from death in a Mafia factional escapade. As Lansky hoped to streamline organized crime generally, Luciano hoped to do the same for the Mafia. The Castellammarese War of 1930-31 presented both men with an excellent opportunity to achieve their respective ends.

THE Castellammarese War was to the world of American gangsters what the Civil War was to the United States—its last great internal convulsion. Before this war, the American Mafia was comprised of Old World

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Sicilian Mafia dons, sometimes called Mustache Petes, whose various families were ranked hierarchically, with the head of the most powerful family being considered the "Boss of Bosses." Given the Mafia mentality, with its inflated concern for personal dignity, a concern which amounted to a form of cultural paranoia that saw affronts to that dignity everywhere, the position of Boss of Bosses was not one that held much hope of longevity. Moreover, during times of factional strife, mafiosi would drop everything else and give themselves over wholly to vendetta. This was not only costly but, as Luciano discovered, damned dangerous. Luciano and other younger men in the Mafia grew tired of the rigidity of the older Mafia dons and their xenophobia, they had had enough of senseless intramural warfare entered into for reasons of pride, and wanted to see the Mafia reformed along cooperative and more modern lines.

In 1930, much of this discontent came to a head when Joseph Masseria, a powerful New York Mafia don, attempted to take over the New York Mafia family headed by Salvatore Maranzano, who came from the region on the northwest coast of Sicily bordering the Gulf of Castellammare. Reprisal predictably followed reprisal, the entire Mafia world divided itself into one of the two rival camps, and over the course of the next year the casualties totalled about sixty. Luciano, Vito Genovese, and Frank Costello were members of the Masseria family. In the hope of doing away with the old-line Mafia system, Luciano made a deal with the Maranzano family to betray Masseria. This he did, leading the aging don into an ambush at a Coney Island restaurant, where, after Luciano had excused himself to go to the washroom, "persons unknown" entered the restaurant and shot Masseria six times in the head and back.

But all, as it must at first have seemed to Luciano, for nought; for once he became dominant, Salvatore Maranzano acted no differently from any of the previous Mafia Bosses of Bosses. So it next became necessary to liquidate Maranzano. On the afternoon of September 11, 1931, four men entered Maranzano's office in the Grand Central Building in Manhattan, flashed police badges, and asked to see Maranzano. When they left, Maranzano had four bullet-holes in him, six knife wounds, and a slashed throat. One Nicola "Culicchia" Gentile, a Mafia troubleshooter during these years, in recounting the murder put the number of assassins at six; he described them as "Jewish youths." All Mafiologists seem agreed that it was Meyer Lansky who had contracted with the men to do the job on Luciano's behalf.

THE Mafia was not the whole of organized crime in America, but it has in this century always been a significant element in organized crime. By nature exclusionary, it required one to be a Sicilian to belong—with very few exceptions; as noted earlier, Capone, whose parents were Neapolitan, was not in the Mafia, yet Vito Genovese, who was also Neapolitan, and Frank Costello, a Calabrian, were both allowed to breach the ban against non-Sicilians. After the Castellammarese War, under Luciano's guidance, the Mafia underwent certain internal reforms—the institution of the Boss of Bosses was replaced by a national commission to settle internal arguments and make overall policy—and an opening was made to the outside world. Though residues of it would remain, the old Sicilian clannishness was largely done for, and a new spirit of cooperation with other gangster factions, chiefly Jews and Italians, set in. While there was no longer any Boss of Bosses, Luciano was obviously the number one man on the Mafia national commission. And Meyer Lansky, for obvious reasons, was very tight with Luciano.

The Castellammarese War took place during the worst years of the Depression, though on the whole organized crime throughout this period suffered very little. In fact, the Depression offered gangsters some rather special opportunities; they, after all, were among the handful of people who had a ready supply of cash on hand. Strangely enough, the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the Presidency in 1932 provided another opportunity. Not long after his election, Roosevelt, wishing to undercut charges that he was elected as a machine candidate, took steps to break up some of the larger city machines. Whereas before gangsters had to pay politicians heavily for small favors, now the politicians, in need of campaign funds and votes, were more likely to come to them, with the result that in many cities organized crime was in the buyer's seat.

Meanwhile, the National Crime Syndicate, as the various elements of organized crime could now be called, underwent a certain amount of internal reform of its own. At a 1934 meeting at the Waldorf in New York, Mr. Messick (like others before him) tells us, the Syndicate began to talk about expansion and diversification in a serious way. In part, the new organization would be reshaped along the lines of the New Deal's National Recovery Act. Regional boards were set up to control criminal activity within specified geographical boundaries, with only a national board above them to hear appeals and set overall policy. In the larger cities crime was to be divided along industrial lines, with different men put in charge of various criminal industries: gambling, prostitution, labor racketeering, etc. Certain broad policy decisions were made—killing, for example, would be more tactfully handled, and both newspapermen and police officials, no matter what their nuisance value, were put strictly off limits. On October 25, 1935, Dutch Schultz, the only major crime figure who had not gone along with the ideas and mandates of the National Crime Syndicate, was gunned down at the Palace Chophouse

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in Newark. Schultz's death eliminated the last of the important schismatics.

The year that followed marked a period of great expansion. Plush gambling casinos, called "rug joints" in the trade, were opened in New Orleans and Hot Springs; Bugsy Siegel pioneered Las Vegas by building the Flamingo Hotel; Lansky developed Broward County in Florida. Other territories were also scouted: Lansky, again, established relations with the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, which were later to prove useful in establishing the great Syndicate-run casino-hotels in Havana; the Bahamas were checked out for future possibilities. Infiltrations were made into legitimate businesses. Under Lansky's guidance, modern accounting procedures were instituted, with special care given to methods of eluding tax indictments while still allowing ample room for skimming millions off the top of profits from such legal ventures as gambling in Nevada. Organized crime became big and smooth and corporatized, and the shaping hand in its metamorphosis was Lansky's—he sat in effect, in Mr. Messick's phrase, as "Chairman of the Board."

WITH its new bigness, organized crime also took on a grey and shadowy quality. The Syndicate, the Organization, the Mob, whatever one chooses to call it, began to seem simultaneously everywhere and nowhere. For people with a penchant for conspiracy theories, the hand of organized crime, as once upon a time for others the hand of the Communists, seems to explain everything. In a crime-minded city like Chicago, for example, the most mundane events are often what might be called Syndicate-explainable. A suburban bar is dimly lit and has a Cadillac and Lincoln parked out front—must be a Syndicate joint. A young man of Italian surname in a low-paying job buys a new Thunderbird convertible—must be running errands for the Mob. A businessman goes bankrupt, then two years later opens a business twice the size of his original one—must be Organization money behind him. And so it goes. In the end nobody knows for sure.

To complicate matters further, the most extravagant stories about the Syndicate do indeed sometimes turn out to be true. There is ample evidence, for example, that during World War II U.S. Naval Intelligence called in Syndicate help to root out espionage and potential sabotage on the New York docks, and that the Syndicate, which had well-entrenched operations there, cooperated. Later in the war the United States government, acting through American Syndicate figures, and the Sicilian Mafia, which had for long years been suppressed by Mussolini, apparently made an arrangement to facilitate the Allied invasion of Sicily. What was in it for the Syndicate was a promised parole for Lucky Luciano—and, lo, at the war's end Luciano was indeed paroled and subsequently deported.

The truth of such ostensibly incredible stories makes it nearly impossible altogether to disbelieve anything about the Syndicate—a fact movie and television scriptwriters have used to advantage. So, alas, at times does Mr. Messick, which is rather a shame, since he really is extraordinarily knowledgeable about his subject. The problem is, in *Lansky*, Mr. Messick is a man with a mission. He would like to see Lansky locked away, and his passion sometimes gets the better of his prose and his judgment. By contrast, Gay Talese's book on the Mafia family headed by Joseph Bonanno, *Honor Thy Father*, suffers from the opposite fault: a total identification with the subject. So thoroughly indeed does Mr. Talese identify with the Bonannos that no critical distance ever develops, all issues get blurred, and the entire picture finally slips from focus.

One day in the corridor of the federal court building in Manhattan, Talese, then a reporter on the New York *Times*, approached Bill Bonanno, son of the Mafia don Joseph Bonanno and his family's number-three man, with the idea of writing a book about his, Bill Bonanno's, boyhood. Bill Bonanno was then busy with larger things, chief among them his father's alleged kidnapping by underworld figures a few months before, but he was, Talese sensed, not altogether cool to the idea. Talese eventually established a relationship with the younger Bonanno—"a friendship," he calls it—and before long Bill Bonanno spilled the beans about his private life to an extent that must have surpassed Mr. Talese's wildest expectations. And yet, when one has gotten through the more than five-hundred thickly detailed and fluently written pages of *Honor Thy Father*, one comes up with just that—beans. In considering gangster movies, Robert Warshow wrote: "Since we do not see the rational and routine aspects of the gangster's behavior, the practice of brutality—the quality of unmixed criminality—becomes the totality of his career." In *Honor Thy Father* just the reverse occurs: we get none of the brutality of the Bonannos' criminal life but only its domesticity—Sicilian Mamas preparing large meals of snails and pasta, men sitting around watching television and playing with their grandchildren, family weddings, and so on. We do not ever see any member of the Bonannos' Mafia family at work. From 1966 through 1969 this family was involved in a Mafia factional struggle popularly known as the Banana War in which nine were killed. Yet never in Mr. Talese's book do Bill Bonanno and his father ever kill anyone, or superintend any criminal operations, or take any illegal money, or indeed commit any serious crime of any kind (although at one point in the narrative Bill is ambushed and shot at). The reasons that specific criminal acts on the part of the Bonannos do not show up in Mr. Talese's book are obvious enough. Still, the overall effect of avoiding their criminal, and concen-

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trating instead on their domestic, lives is to turn the Bonannos into just plain folks, a kind of Italo-American Swiss Family Robinson.

But the Bonannos are not just plain folks. Joseph Bonanno, a man of the older generation of gangsters, was originally a member of the Maranzano Mafia family. He was given command of his own family in the reorganization which took place at the conclusion of the Castellammarese War. At that time he was the youngest of all the Mafia dons. In the early 60's he achieved some national notoriety when it was discovered that he was the Mafia sponsor of Joe Valachi. Apparently in Mafia circles Joseph Bonanno was always considered something of an overreacher. Vito Genovese, according to Hank Messick, continually suspected him of trying to move in on his, Genovese's, territory. Darkly handsome, a careful dresser, something of a sport with money—Mr. Talese tells a story about how when a friend picked up a check on him at a restaurant, Bonanno *père* tore up the hundred dollar bill with which he himself had intended to pay the check and left it in little pieces in the ashtray—Joseph Bonanno is above all a taciturn man. Taciturnity, however, is not a quality that could be attributed to his son, Bill. Surely the Mafia imperative of *omerta,* the vow of silence, has never been more thoroughly outraged than it was in Bill Bonanno's collaboration with Mr. Talese on this book. Now that the book is out, Bill Bonanno must certainly be unfit any longer for a life of crime. But perhaps it is just as well; perhaps he was never cut out for it in the first place. As a gangster, he seems bush-league and rather inept. He already had an ulcer in his adolescence.

IN TRUTH, the once simple game of cops and robbers has become appallingly intricate, and, though this may offend one's sporting sense, it is now clearly weighted on the side of the cops. Wiretapping and bugging devices have reached a high and subtle stage of development. Mr. Talese reports that the FBI once installed bugs into the foundation and the very framework of one hood's new home before the carpenters had finished working on it. Early in *Honor Thy Father* Bill Bonanno is concerned that FBI agents might break into his home *posing* as burglars to install bugs, and he kept an electronic debugging device in his Long Island home.

Life in the courtroom has also become more arduous. Because of a new federal law, a suspected criminal subpoenaed for questioning must either testify or be prepared to be cited for contempt. If he testifies, and if he is in fact a criminal, he is faced with one of three possibilities: incriminating himself, committing (and later being tried for) perjury, or betraying his associates. One other alternative is to go into long boring months of hiding to avoid being subpoenaed. For not testifying before a grand jury in connection with his father's disappearance, Bill Bonanno was cited for contempt and made to serve a brief stretch in jail.

Then there is the Internal Revenue to worry about. If one has any kind of reputation as a gangster, the IRS monitors everything. In 1968 Bill Bonanno lost a tax case in Arizona and owed the government roughly $60,000; his property, home, and business holdings were tied up; and the interest on his various debts was something on the order of $160 a day. It was in part because of this that he used a borrowed credit card, which ended in a four-year jail sentence and a $10,000 fine. What happened to him, one might well think, shouldn't happen to a businessman.

Bill Bonanno would say that it *wouldn't* happen to a businessman. Throughout *Honor Thy Father* there is a kind of chorus, sometimes sung by Bill Bonanno, sometimes by Mr. Talese, to the effect that the Mafia and other gangsters are really only servants to a hypocritical society, providing the illegal commodities of gambling, prostitution, and so on that the public demands and the law forbids. Bill Bonanno reflects on the atrocities committed by the Green Berets in Vietnam, and how next to these the total of nine murders in the Banana War seems small change, and that in any event nine murders is "probably less than the number of murders each month among married American couples." And in case any of us happened to have missed the point, Mr. Talese underlines it by noting that on the same day and in the same building in which Bill Bonanno was being tried on his credit-card case, the bribery case of James Marcus, a case involving the theft of millions in a white-collar crime, was also being tried.

But then we have heard all this before. It is the argument, updated four decades, of Capone: "Nobody's really on the legit, when it comes down to cases." Perhaps not. But there are cases *and* there are cases. True enough, nobody uses the services of organized crime unwittingly, no one is enticed into the vices it purveys. A bookie doesn't look for a gambler, a gambler looks for a bookie. Or consider the people who use the services of Syndicate loan sharks, or "juice men" as they are called. They are usually people, as Bill Bonanno points out, who cannot get a loan from a bank or a loan agency or any other reliable source because they have already been branded unreliable. Juice men do not look for such people, such people look for juice men. It is all very neat, except for one point Bonanno doesn't mention—the man in debt to the Syndicate who doesn't repay his loan, along with its staggering interest, gets killed. Maybe "nobody's really on the legit," but some are ready to go further than others.

THE men who have controlled organized crime in this country have by and large been willing to go all the way. As such, they pose a profound problem. Mr. Talese compares the government's anti-crime crusade—actual-

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ly the last three governments': Kennedy's, Johnson's, and Nixon's—with Mussolini's successful anti-Mafia campaign in Sicily, "disregarding civil rights as it invaded privacy and [relying] on shady informers, [recording] a series of highly publicized arrests of mafiosi and reputed mafiosi, incarcerating many men who seemed ready for the old-age home." The comparison with Mussolini is a heavy-handed touch, for the Mafia in Sicily, after all, has another enemy named Danilo Dolci. Dolci fights the Mafia because he believes—and there is a considerable amount of evidence on his side—that, more than any single element, the Mafia has bled Sicily white and kept it poor and backward all these years.

It does not seem bizarre to suggest that if allowed to do so, gangsters would do the same here or in any other country. And so it has seemed necessary to abrogate some of the values of our society in order to contain them. Their phones are tapped, their homes and offices bugged, the back of justice is nearly wrenched in the effort to imprison them for crimes—tax evasion, mail fraud, carrying non-prescription drugs—largely irrelevant to their real deeds. The alternative would seem to be to allow them to flourish. Nevertheless, when civil liberties are set aside, even in the name of a very rough, and no matter how well-deserved, justice, everyone is in danger of paying the price. In the final analysis, this may be the most significant inroad that organized crime has made on American life.

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Wiretaps & National Security

Alan M. Dershowitz

DURING its current term, the Supreme Court will be hearing argument on whether warrantless "national-security" wiretaps are constitutional. The phrase "national security" conjures up the image of spies, sabotage, and invasion, but a considerable number of such taps are conducted against domestic organizations or individuals who are suspected of activities deemed contrary to the national interest. It was recently learned, for example, that such persons as Martin Luther King and Elijah Muhammad and such organizations as the Jewish Defense League and the Black Panther party have been the subject of extended national-security taps. These taps are authorized exclusively by the prosecutorial arm of the government—by the attorney general—without the need for a judicial warrant based on probable cause. How many national-security taps and "bugs"* are currently in operation, and against what sorts of persons, is a well-guarded secret, but bits of information that are slowly emerging raise some disturbing questions.

The case presenting the issue of the constitutionality of warrantless national-security taps involves "Pun" Plamondon, an alleged "White Panther" standing trial for conspiracy to blow up a CIA office in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Plamondon's lawyer, William Kunstler, filed a pre-trial motion asking the government to disclose whether any of the defendant's conversations had been monitored. Motions of this kind are made rather routinely these days in so-called political cases, and —not infrequently—they strike paydirt, as Kunstler's motion did. It elicited an affidavit from the attorney general himself, acknowledging that "Plamondon has participated in conversations which were overheard by government agents," and that no warrant had been obtained. But Mitchell vigorously asserted that the tap—which was on some unnamed person's phone, not on Plamondon's—was legal, since it was "employed to gather intelligence information deemed necessary to protect the nation from attempts of domestic organizations to attack and subvert the existing structure of the government."

The lower court disagreed. It described the "sweep of the assertion of the Presidential power" to tap without a warrant as "both eloquent and breathtaking," but it declined to "suspend an important principle of the Constitution." It held that "in dealing with the threat of domestic subversion," the warrant requirement of the Fourth Amendment could not be dispensed with. (The lower court did not decide whether a warrantless tap could be authorized to protect the country from "attack, espionage or sabotage by foes or agents of a *foreign* power," since the government had conceded that the Plamondon tap was not installed for any such "foreign intelligence" purpose.)† The court ordered the government to disclose to Plamondon the transcripts of each of

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* A "bug" is a monitoring device concealed anywhere and capable of picking up conversations as well as other sounds; a wiretap picks up only phone conversations. Some confusion has resulted from the fact that "bugs" are sometimes installed in the mechanism of a telephone. The government is fond of citing statistics purporting to demonstrate that the number of "national-security surveillances"—a phrase that includes both bugs and taps —has "significantly declined" over the past few years. These statistics are fallacious for two obvious reasons: 1) they include figures only on the number of warrantless taps, not bugs; and 2) they show a decline around the time the Supreme Court implicitly authorized the use of taps with a warrant. (Prior to that decision, all taps involving national security were warrantless, and were therefore included in the government statistics; now warrants are secured for some of these taps, and only the warrantless ones are listed by the government.)

† The American Bar Association Project on Minimum Standards for Criminal Justice "considered and rejected [a proposal] which would have recognized a . . . power in the President not subject to prior judicial review to deal with purely domestic subversive groups." Instead, it recognized a power limited to "foreign intelligence activities." Thus, it is precisely the power rejected by the ABA committee—certainly no radical organization—that the government is asserting in the Plamondon case. In its brief before the Supreme Court, the government argues that no real distinction can be drawn between foreign and domestic subversion (though in prior cases it had argued in favor of such a distinction). Moreover, if no distinction can be drawn between foreign and domestic subversion, it would seem to follow that warrants should be required in both cases. Finally, a real distinction can be drawn between foreign-intelligence gathering and domestic subversion.

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his monitored conversations. If this ruling is upheld, Plamondon could be tried and convicted only if the government can prove that neither the indictment nor any of the trial evidence emanated from the tainted tap.

The issue thus presented for the Supreme Court to resolve is a fundamental one, going to the heart of the "separation of powers" on which our government is based. For the executive branch is asserting the power to dispense with an important judicial "check" on its action, namely the requirement that a judicial officer determine whether there is probable cause on which to issue a warrant. It is somewhat surprising that the Supreme Court has never decided—or even intimated how it would decide—whether national-security wiretaps constitute an exception to the warrant requirement, especially since the practice of warrantless national-security taps is now more than thirty years old.

It was on May 21, 1940 that President Franklin Roosevelt sent to his attorney general the confidential memorandum that is regarded as the baptismal certificate of the national-security wiretap (though, significantly, the term "national security" was not used).* Roosevelt began by expressing his agreement with an early Supreme Court decision that "under ordinary and normal circumstances wiretapping by Government agents should not be carried on for the excellent reason that it is almost bound to lead to abuse of civil rights." But these were not ordinary and normal times: America was preparing to enter the war; German and Japanese spy rings were operating on both coasts; and "certain other nations" had been engaged "in preparation for sabotage." Concluding that the Supreme Court had never intended its prohibition on wiretapping to extend "to grave matters involving the defense of the nation," Roosevelt informed the FBI that they were "at liberty to secure information by listening devices direct[ed] to the conversations . . . of persons suspected of subversive activities against the government . . . , including suspected spies."† The President cautioned, however, that these investigations must be limited "to a minimum" and "insofar as possible to aliens."

But governments grow comfortable with special war powers, even when peace returns. And so, after the cessation of hostilities, Attorney General Tom Clark convinced President Truman that "the present troubled period in international affairs, accompanied as it is by an increase in subversive activity here at home," required a continuation of the "investigative measures" authorized by Roosevelt. Nor was Clark content merely with retaining the status quo. Warning that "the country is threatened by a very substantial increase in crime"—an exaggeration typically made by attorneys general requesting additional powers or appropriations—he "reluctantly" requested the President to approve the power to tap "in cases vitally affecting the domestic security" (for that high-sounding phrase, read "organized crime") or "where human life is in jeopardy" (for that, read "murder, kidnapping, robbery, arson, burglary, and the sale of narcotics"). With Truman's quick concurrence, the narrow exception virtually became the rule. It was President Johnson who—at the urging of another Clark (this one more sensitive to civil liberties)**—again narrowed the exception. In doing so, he introduced the current phrase "national security" which falls somewhere between Roosevelt's national "defense" and Truman's "domestic security."

It is not entirely clear why the government needs a national-security exception to the ordinary rules now governing wiretaps. When the exception was first created, there was an absolute prohibition against all wiretapping by federal officials—*with or without a warrant.* (The rule was not technically framed in terms of a prohibition on tapping, but rather in terms of a prohibition on all use of such evidence—and its fruits—in federal criminal prosecutions.) Thus, if national-security wiretaps were to be conducted at all, they would have to be authorized under an exception to the ordinary rules. In 1967, however, the Supreme Court said that wiretaps could be conducted—where any kind of criminal conduct was suspected—provided that the government secured a warrant based on probable cause and narrowly limited in time and scope. Under that decision, the FBI may lawfully conduct wiretaps in national-security cases if they secure a warrant. Unwilling to comply with this requirement, the federal government claims that national-security taps are still an exception to the ordinary rules, even though the ordinary rules which gave rise to the national-security exception have now been dramatically changed.

The government, arguing in support of this position before the lower courts, invoked "the inherent power of the President to safeguard the security of the nation"—the "historical power of the sovereign to preserve itself." The government was saying, in effect, that there is no separation of powers—no checks or balances on the executive by the other branches—when the President decides that the security of the nation is involved. The President must be trusted to exercise his powers in a constitutional manner, since

* The baptismal rather than the birth certificate, because it is acknowledged that J. Edgar Hoover was widely engaged in such wiretaps well before obtaining the President's formal authority to do so.

† Since the McCarthy era the word "subversive" has taken on an extremely broad meaning. At the time Roosevelt used it in his 1940 memorandum, it still retained its somewhat narrower (though still imprecise) dictionary meaning: "intended to bring about the overthrow of the government by unlawful means."

** In fairness to Justice Clark, it should be noted that subsequently he became quite critical of wiretapping.

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"the occupant of that office, like the members of this Court, takes a solemn oath to protect and defend the Constitution," and this "carries with it the weightiest presumption that those powers will not be abused." (The attorney general—to whom the President has delegated all authority in these matters—also takes such an oath; but it is not without relevance that the attorney general is the country's top prosecutor; nor is it immaterial that two of the holders of this office during the past ten years have also been Presidential campaign managers, intensely involved in partisan politics.) If by some chance these powers were to be abused by the President or his deputies, the argument continues, then the "final significant restraint" lies not with the courts, but with the "electorate" which "can reflect its dissatisfaction with the exercise of the power."

This argument—which entirely neglects the counter-majoritarian purpose of the Bill of Rights and the anti-centralist thrust of the Constitution itself—has been rejected by the Supreme Court over and over again. The classic response was formulated in a case growing out of Lincoln's attempt to limit the judicial power during the Civil War:

> This nation, as experience has proved . . . , has no right to expect that it will always have wise and humane rulers, sincerely attached to the Constitution. Wicked men, ambitious of power, with hatred of liberty and contempt of law, may fill the place once occupied by Washington and Lincoln. . . . If our fathers had failed to provide for just such a contingency, they would have been false to the trust reposed in them. They knew—the history of the world had told them—that unlimited power, wherever lodged at such a time, was especially hazardous to freemen.

More recently, the Supreme Court rejected a similar assertion of executive power in the Pentagon Papers case, and it was probably this rejection that led the government to play down the "inherent power" argument in its wiretap brief recently filed in the Supreme Court. Instead, the government is now claiming that warrantless national-security taps were authorized by Congress in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.

That act actually provides three separate national-security exceptions to its otherwise absolute requirement of a warrant before any tap. The first authorizes a 48-hour tap if "an emergency situation exists" with respect to "conspiratorial activities threatening the national-security interests," provided that a warrant is immediately sought at the expiration of that period. The government did not act pursuant to that emergency exception in the Plamondon case. Nor is it relying on the second exception, which is limited to the prevention of attack by a foreign enemy or the gathering of foreign intelligence information. The "exception" which is being relied on by the government provides as follows: "Nor shall anything contained in this chapter be deemed to limit the constitutional power of the President to take such measures as he deems necessary to protect the United States against the overthrow of the Government by force or other unlawful means, or against any other clear and present danger to the structure or existence of the Government." That provision, however, begs the critical question: "What precisely is 'the constitutional power of the President' in dealing with domestic threats to the structure and existence of the government?" As the lower court observed, the 1968 act was "clearly designed to place Congress in a completely neutral position in the very controversy with which this case is concerned." Moreover, even if Congress had explicitly exempted domestic national-security wiretaps from the warrant requirement of the Fourth Amendment, the constitutionality of that exemption would still have to be decided by the Supreme Court.*

IN PASSING on that difficult constitutional question, the Supreme Court might well ponder why the government is so vigorously asserting its right to dispense with warrants in national-security cases. Is it interested merely in preserving its convictions in the few pending cases that might be reversed if warrantless taps, conducted years ago, were held unconstitutional? Or does it have a real—and legitimate—need to tap phones without judicial intervention in this category of cases? There is little doubt that it could secure a warrant in any case in which there were a plausible—even a weak—claim that the national security required a tap. After all, the government may seek its warrant from the magistrate or judge of its choice. In the unlikely event that it were to fail on the first (or even the second) attempt, it could continue until it succeeded.†

The government explains its unwillingness to comply with the warrant requirement by suggesting that compliance would pose problems of security, presumably because an indiscreet or cor-

* The Fourth Amendment does not unambiguously require a warrant for all searches. It provides for the right to be secure "against unreasonable searches," and it also specifies that "no warrant shall issue, but upon probable cause. . . ." The court, however, has interpreted the amendment to require a warrant for all searches, except in a narrow class of emergencies—for example, where there is imminent danger that the evidence will be destroyed. In such cases, the search must be justified, after the fact, as "reasonable" if its fruits are to be employed. But the government has taken the position that the usual standard of reasonableness is inapplicable to a national-security wiretap, even in an after-the-fact judicial evaluation. It argues that "great deference must be given to the attorney general's judgment" and that the range of review is "extremely limited."

† Of the 217 wiretap-warrant applications during the last two years, only one was denied.

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ruptible judge or court employee might betray the tap or disclose the identity of a secret informant whose information was used in the warrant application. But the government's wide discretion in selecting the judge before whom it will make the application diminishes the force of this argument. Surely there are some judges whose patriotism and discretion are beyond question in the view of the government. In an extremely delicate case, for example, the government could present its application to the Chief Justice without even the clerk being made privy to its contents. Moreover, under existing law, the government need not disclose the name of its informant —even to the judge in secret—in order to secure a warrant. Finally, the government concedes that in the event of a prosecution against anyone whose conversation was overheard, it must disclose the entire record of the tap to a judge in a secret proceeding (as it did in the Plamondon case). Now, if the government is willing to trust the discretion of a judge (selected at random) not to disclose the contents of a tap after it has occurred, why is it not willing to trust the discretion of a judge (chosen by the government) not to reveal the existence of a tap before it has occurred? The "indiscreet judge" argument, though vigorously pressed by the government, is obviously a makeweight.

There is a weightier argument against requiring a warrant in national-security cases, but the government has been reluctant to articulate it. A warrant, after all, must be based on probable cause that a crime has been, is being, or is about to be committed. The government would like to be free, however, to conduct certain wiretaps even when probable cause is lacking. For example, the Soviet ambassador engages in no crime when he discusses his country's negotiating position on the Mideast or the SALT talks, but our government would like to—and surely will try to —monitor such conversations (as the Soviet government just as surely tries to monitor similar conversations by our diplomats). If a warrant, based on ordinary probable cause, were required, the monitoring of this kind of conversation would become legally impossible.*

But this argument, which has considerable force in the context of foreign-intelligence wiretapping, is wholly inapplicable to the kind of tapping at issue in the case now before the Supreme Court. For the tap in the Plamondon case was not installed for purposes of gathering foreign intelligence; it was installed, in the words of the government, "to protect the national security against the threat posed by individuals and groups within the United States." Put most generously to the government, this means that the tap was directed against American citizens and organizations suspected of engaging in and planning bombings, riots, and other violent activities. All such activities are, of course, illegal, and anyone who is planning them—or even talking about planning them—is, under present government thinking, guilty of conspiracy (witness the Berrigan indictment). Surely, in any such case there would be little difficulty in obtaining a warrant. Yet the government insists that it must—and that it will—continue to tap phones without securing the judicial approval that it could so readily get in any plausible case.

IF IT is true that warrants in national-security cases would be so easy to obtain, then another question—really the converse of the question previously posed—is suggested: Why do civil libertarians press so hard for what appears to be the hollow protection of a warrant secured from a government-selected magistrate? Or to put it another way, why is the warrant issue viewed as so crucial by both sides?

To understand why civil libertarians feel the way they do about warrants in national-security cases requires a bit of background on the way they view wiretaps in general. To begin with, a great many civil libertarians oppose all wiretapping, even when authorized by warrant. They single out that technique of law enforcement because of its tendency to be indiscriminately overinclusive. As Ramsey Clark has put it: "No technique of law enforcement casts a wider net than electronic surveillance. Blind, it catches everything in the sea of sound but cannot discriminate between fish and fowl." Of course, no technique of law enforcement casts a perfectly narrow net. We do, after all, convict some innocent people; we shoot some fleeing "felons" who turn out to be guiltless bystanders; we preventively detain some defendants who are ultimately acquitted. But we do insist, as we should, that these deprivations be imposed mostly on people who are guilty, and only rarely on those who are innocent.

Wiretapping is different. It is a deprivation that falls mostly on the innocent. The ratio of "innocent" monitored conversations to "guilty" monitored conversations is extremely high, especially in national-security cases. This is so for a number of reasons. National-security taps are often installed on the phones of persons who are conceded to be innocent of any wrongdoing. And even taps installed on the phones of persons who are themselves guilty succeed in picking up the conversations of many innocent callers and recipients of calls. Finally, most of the monitored conversations, even between two guilty persons, involve matters unrelated to any wrongdoing. Moreover, because wiretapping is a clandestine "deprivation," its precise effects are difficult to assess. The

* A warrant requirement would not necessarily prevent the continuation of all warrantless taps. It would merely prevent prosecution in the small number of cases where a defendant's conversations were overheard. Recently, however, an affirmative suit was filed on behalf of the Jewish Defense League seeking monetary damages for the warrantless tapping of their telephones.

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behavior of some persons whose conversations are not, in fact, being monitored is significantly affected by the *fear* that their phones are tapped (witness the "debugging" operations recently conducted by various Senators and Congressmen), while others, whose phones are being tapped, but who do not—and never will—know that their conversations were monitored, are entirely unaffected. Yet despite the pervasiveness of the wiretap, and its obvious chilling effect, the government blandly asserts in its brief that "[t]he overhearing of a telephone conversation involves a lesser invasion of privacy than a physical search of a man's home or his person." (This assertion sharply raises the question of whether an administration that values the privacy of conversation and thought less than the privacy of property is the appropriate authority to decide, without any judicial check, that a phone must be tapped for national-security purposes.)

Making national-security taps conditional on a warrant, some civil libertarians argue, would reduce the ratio of innocent to guilty conversations overheard because warrants must be narrowly circumscribed, limited in time and scope, and related to criminal conduct. While recognizing that most magistrates issue wiretap warrants as if they were presents at Christmastime, the civil libertarians contend that there might be some reluctance to issue them in instances where it was plain that the primary motivation was political and that the national-security concern was a pretext. For it is widely assumed by civil libertarians today that a considerable number of domestic national-security wiretaps are conducted primarily for reasons unrelated to genuine national-security concerns. They are thought to be directed against political dissidents—both inside and outside the government—and general troublemakers who could be adequately, and lawfully, dealt with by the ordinary process of the criminal law. This is not to say that a plausible national-security concern—broadly defined—is lacking in each instance of a tap. It is to say that this concern frequently serves as an *excuse* for a broad surveillance whose primary purpose is either political or conventional law enforcement.

WHETHER or not the civil libertarians are correct in their assessment of the value of warrants in curbing abuse, their claim that domestic national-security wiretaps have been authorized in highly questionable cases is supported by the evidence currently available. Consider, for example, the tapping of Martin Luther King's telephone (and the electronic "bugging" of his hotel rooms). These warrantless invasions of King's privacy—and the privacy of countless others who conversed with him—have been defended as necessary for the national security. But in what specific sense did the security of this nation depend on the FBI's overhearing King's telephone conversations and eavesdropping on his hotel-room activities? A number of justifications have been offered by those close to Robert Kennedy, who, as attorney general, acceded to J. Edgar Hoover's request to authorize the tap. (No authorization was ever given for the bug in the hotel rooms.)

The Kennedy version goes something like this: two of King's close associates—one a New York lawyer, the other a member of the SCLC staff—were thought to be either Communist agents, party members, or sympathizers. After receiving warnings from the Justice Department that associating with these persons might damage the civil-rights movement, King dismissed the tainted staff member and initially severed his relationship with the suspected lawyer. But after a while, contact with the lawyer was gradually reestablished. It was this that led Kennedy to authorize Hoover to tap King's home phones and those in his Atlanta and New York offices.

Burke Marshall—Kennedy's respected and civil-liberties-minded assistant attorney general—has made the shocking statement that his boss may have "refused too long" to authorize the King national-security tap. "I can't tell you who the man was or what the allegations were," he says, "but I can tell you I think it would not be responsible for an attorney general—in view of the characterizations of what that man was doing and who he was working for—for the attorney general to refuse a tap." He continues, suggestively but mysteriously: "If you take it as being true that there has been an espionage system and that the Bureau has an obligation to do things about that—if you put that all together, I would say you could say he refused too long."

Very well, then, let us "take" all that as "being true." Let us assume the very worst: that the New York lawyer was a real Russian spy, working for, and being paid by, the KGB. Assume further that his sole job was to influence King in directions favored by the Soviet Union. Assume even further that he was succeeding. Would this justify a national-security tap on King's phone? There is surely no claim that King was being used to further espionage or sabotage activities. He was, after all, engaged primarily in entirely lawful and constitutionally protected activity (even if that activity could hypothetically be shown to have favored the interests of the Soviet Union). He made and received thousands of calls to and from concerned, patriotic, and law-abiding American citizens about matters that were none of the government's business to overhear. He also engaged in—or erroneously believed he was engaged in—a private life, which also was none of the government's business to monitor. His telephone contact with the New York lawyer was an extremely small and sporadic part of his activities (and there is no evidence that he met with *him* in the bugged hotel rooms). Yet the wiretap picked up and recorded *all* of the con-

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versations on these phones. Even if the scenario suggested by the Marshall version is accurate, would it not have been more sensible to tap the New York lawyer's phones? (Indeed, since it is technically feasible to monitor and record only calls placed between two specified numbers, it would have been possible to tap and record only those calls placed between King and the suspected lawyer.)

It is significant that a former public official as respected and dedicated as Burke Marshall would argue that it would "not be responsible" for an attorney general to have declined, or even delayed, authorization for a warrantless national-security wiretap on the basis of the evidence that he suggests existed. We only rarely have men in positions of power as sensitive and as committed to civil liberties as Marshall. If this is what we can expect of a Burke Marshall, what can we expect of the men who generally populate high office?

Another justification offered by some Kennedy intimates is that the tap was authorized, as former attorney general Katzenbach put it, "for the protection of Dr. King." Giving the FBI the power to protect King is like giving the cat the power to protect the canary. In fact, it is now widely acknowledged that no sooner did J. Edgar Hoover come up with some damaging information about King—relating to his sex life—that he leaked it to the press. Was this also done to protect King?

It is not difficult to understand what really motivated the King wiretap. The existence of the lawyer in New York provided a plausible—that is perhaps too strong a word—argument that some vague national-security interest was involved. The FBI seized upon this excuse to request authorization to do what they wanted to do for other—completely illegitimate—reasons. It was difficult for the Justice Department to deny the request: what would it look like later on if it did turn out that King was indeed involved with Communists and if Hoover leaked to his Congressional or newspaper cronies the fact that Kennedy had stood in the way of an investigation which would have disclosed this? So Kennedy took the least politically risky course. And J. Edgar Hoover got his wiretap.

The King episode does not stand alone in suggesting that the primary reason certain domestic national-security taps are employed has little to do with the genuine needs of national security. The recent case involving Muhammad Ali, which revealed the previously unacknowledged King tap, also disclosed that pervasive taps had been authorized on the phones of Elijah Muhammad, the leader of the Black Muslim Church. Here, too, I would speculate that there may have been a plausible national-security interest in a limited aspect of Elijah Muhammad's activity. But the warrantless tap was not limited, as one with a warrant would have to be. It extended to every call to and from Elijah Muhammad's various offices over a considerable period of time. And it picked up conversations relating to political and personal activities that were none of the government's legitimate business (for example, a disclosure that a well-known person's brother had been kicked out of the Muslim Church for being out with a girl all night).

The phrase "domestic national-security wiretap" is not self-limiting or self-defining. It means what its history tells us it means. It means what this and previous administrations have defined it to mean. Only if we are given some idea of how it has been used can the people, and the courts, have any intelligent basis for judging whether the alleged need for a domestic national-security exception outweighs its potential for abuse. On the basis of the evidence presently available, I would suggest that if we were to examine all the domestic national-security wiretaps conducted by the FBI, a disturbing picture would emerge. We would find numerous cases where a plausible but narrow national-security concern has been used as an excuse for an improper and pervasive wiretap whose real purpose is political surveillance. Unfortunately, however, there is no way for the citizenry—or even the courts—to examine the logs of all national-security wiretaps. We are left instead with the assurances of people like former attorney general Herbert Brownell that "Experience demonstrates that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has never abused the wiretap authority."

But what "experience" is Brownell referring to? To whom has this been "demonstrated"? Certainly not to the public. I, for one, do not feel that we can rely on the self-interested assurances of former Justice Department officials that all is in order. My surmise is that if the Justice Department were to turn over the records of domestic national-security wiretaps in any given year for study to a non-partisan group of scholars, many abuses of the kind suggested above would emerge. If I am wrong—if an impartial evaluation were to disclose that warrantless domestic national-security taps have been narrowly employed only in cases of immediate, extreme, and irremediable danger to our survival—then there might be grounds for exempting this class of wiretaps from the usual constitutional requirements. But neither the people nor the courts can intelligently decide whether this is so until we are given some idea of how such wiretaps have in fact been used. In the meantime, on the basis of what we already know, we have good reason for supposing that "national security" is sometimes invoked as a pretext for political surveillance of an altogether illegitimate kind.

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A Blow Struck for the Revolution

Jacob Marateck

JACOB MARATECK (1883-1950) was a Polish Jew who, following a youthful career as a yeshiva student and labor agitator in Warsaw, served for a number of years in the Russian army. After a variety of adventures—including membership in the imperial bodyguard and alleged involvement in a plot to assassinate the Czar—he escaped to America. The present memoir of the Russian-Japanese War of 1904-5 was taken from one of the twenty-seven handwritten notebooks kept by Marateck throughout his life; it has been adapted from the Yiddish by Shimon Wincelberg.

THE second day of Rosh Hashanah we line up for the train to Manchuria. Our lieutenant, a moody graybeard in his sixties, who ascribes his low rank to lack of "protection" at Court, tells us we're lucky. How are we lucky? We will get to ride to the battlefield in comfort, while the enemy, primitive little beasts that they are, will have to walk. He makes "battlefield" sound like a scheduled stop on the Trans-Siberian Railway. As for the "primitive" Japanese, I incline to suspect they are not exactly receiving us with open arms.

My friend Glasnik whispers I should let the lieutenant know we would also be happy to walk, and with a little luck the war will be over by the time we get there. But I'm a one-striper, a squadleader, and keep my mouth shut, scowling with authority.

The train has ninety-six cars, each packed to at least three times what it can hold. This way, the railroad is able, on one track, to deliver its quota of 30,000 replacements a month. I try not to think about the men we are "replacing."

We sit in our compartment, barely able to stir an elbow, each of us still hoarding his own fears and memories. For the moment, Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews sit packed together in a pleasant atmosphere of revolutionary harmony. That is, somebody starts out by wondering how many of us will return alive, and soon somebody else ends up proposing that, at the next halt, we surround our officers and kill them all, then make the train go back to Petersburg and proclaim the Revolution.

No one bothers to remember that the officers have all our ammunition under lock and key. Not that it makes much difference. They're fine talkers and dreamers, our Russians, but hopelessly addicted to authority. When Glasnik wants as usual to add his comments, I quietly shut him up. I know from past experience, no matter which way the conversation turns out, they'll end up blaming it all on the Jews.

Days pass. We are all stiff and irritable from the lack of space, and no one any longer talks revolution because by now we hate the stink of one another.

But soon we come to appreciate our crowded compartments. The train has to cross Lake Baikal on rails laid over the ice, which often suddenly cracks open into yawning rifts and crevices. To keep the cars from being too heavy, the officers are taken across by horse-drawn sledge, and the rest of us walk, our rifles with their eternally fixed bayonets resting on one shoulder. Forty miles across the windswept ice, with only brief pauses for hot soup from our mobile kitchens. By morning it turns out a number of men have disappeared, probably drowned, and many more suffer from frostbite.

Another week in the unheated train, and one morning we awaken to a strange landscape in which the roofs of houses curve upward like boats, and the trees put me in mind of things that might be growing on the moon. This is Asia. The people here have darker skins and narrow, villainous Oriental eyes. Most of the men believe them already to be "Japs," having little notion that Japan is almost as far from here as Moscow.

The Orientals scatter like chickens whenever the train comes to a halt and we pile out to stretch our legs. Only some peddlers are willing to approach. The officers drive them away, they might be spies.

At one of our stops we are told to send a detail to a nearby village. They are to fetch five oxen purchased for us to slaughter for food. After a week on little but hard black bread, foul soup, and hot tea, we await their return in high spirits.

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Suddenly, commotion. Three of our five men come running out of the woods as though pursued by a demon. They report how, passing through a lonely stretch of forest, they were set upon by armed "Japs" who tried to steal our oxen.

We run into the woods with bayonets poised. The oxen are there, unharmed. Nearby, the other two men are lying in their own blood. One is dead of a knife wound, the other is still twitching, trying vainly with his hands to stop the spurts of blood.

Someone grimly says, "Well, the war has started." We run in search of the killers. Deep in the forest we come upon a group of frightened Asiatic civilians who try to hide from us. Our ranking non-com decides two of the "Japs" must be killed in retaliation for our men. Since we still have no bullets, we're obliged to use bayonets.

Some friends and I disgustedly head back toward the train. Behind us, we hear a couple of screams, then silence, then a burst of loud wailing. It turns out later the actual bandits were *Chunchus* ("Red Beards"), Chinese brigands who are so powerful and so well organized they haven't hesitated to attack and rob even armed Russian patrols.

BACK on the train, gorged with meat, we hear we're headed straight for the battlefield, somewhere between Mukden and Port Arthur, where heavy fighting is taking place. We're said to have lost over 60,000 men in one battle alone.

Officers come through the cars now to deliver inspirational talks. How our Little Father the Czar is counting on each one of us. But mainly about the enemy's cruelty to Russian prisoners. This is to inflame our thirst for blood. In actuality, it has the opposite effect. Most of us are left subdued and depressed. Who wants to get involved with such uncivilized savages?

Even the Ukrainians and Poles are no longer voicing much eagerness for bloodshed. It's strange to see them so earnest. I wonder if I haven't misjudged them, if, in past years, it wasn't really we Jews who were guilty of provoking them to violence purely by our impudent helplessness.

Even one of the officers is overheard to remark, "I thought surely by the time we'd get here the war would be over."

Another young lieutenant, deep in self-pity, observes, "How can they expect an educated man to go and expose himself to being killed, or crippled for life?"

The common soldiers once again lapse into talk of revolution. But in truth, we all know we're in for it now, and there is no way back except in some condition we'd rather not think about.

Next day our train lumbers to a halt near a village used as a transfer-point for the wounded. I can hear no sound of guns yet, but our commandant says we are very close to the battlefield.

Hearts beat more quickly as we are marched through the village. Its principal building serves as a field dressing station, and the streets are full of haggard men in Red Cross armbands wearing smeared butcher aprons. The huts, wherever you look, are filled with men groaning, gasping, or horribly still. Some of them lie on the ground outside, listlessly waiting to die. We try to ask the wounded what it was like, back there. They look at us blankly.

Later I run into a Jewish artilleryman I'd known in Petersburg. He has lost one arm but insists it was the luckiest thing that ever happened to him. What he tells about the fighting is enough to make your hair stand on end. I'd never realized how totally unprepared we were for this war. Unlike the Japanese, we have almost no mountain artillery, nothing but heavy stuff, useless for mobile warfare.

I ask, why aren't the wounded taken to hospitals? Answer: because there are none, at least in this sector. The fact is, our high command had expected to engage the enemy much further to the east, near the Yalu River. But the Japanese had treacherously refused to cooperate.

There is a hospital train on the way. But it was due several days ago and seems to have disappeared.

A couple of idle and oppressive days among the piteous cries and foul smell of the injured and dying leave most of us ready to pray for a quick death rather than the slow one of a serious wound. Then it turns out our commandant had read his map incorrectly and stopped the train in the wrong place. The fighting, at present, is said to be at least another half-day's journey from here.

They pack us back into the train, and all ninety-six cars continue on their blind search for the war. But we still don't reach our destination. This time because the Japanese have blown up a bridge about ten minutes before we get there. They must have spies all along the line. We are saved only because God is good and our train, as usual, was late.

The adjutant cables a message to Harbin. They must at once send engineers and materials to repair the bridge. He is told in turn that we are urgently needed at the front. He should find boats and ferry us across, then force-march us the rest of the way, some hundreds of miles, with no mention of food.

Fortunately, none of the boats we're able to commandeer is big enough to carry our field-pieces, ammunition, or horses, and our commandant, may he live and be well, refuses to send us into combat empty-handed.

We soldiers, of course, are quite content to stay right here, and wouldn't care if they never fixed the tracks. Except, another troop train now

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arrives, and suddenly there are thousands of us stranded here with barely enough food for a day or two.

Being on a single-track line, with no nearby spurs for detours, we can't even send the second train back to get us food. Meanwhile, more trains will be arriving daily, all filled with hungry men.

We are given ammunition for our rifles and told we have to live off the land. The Russian soldier with his peasant background is a natural-born forager. But in this rocky, frozen soil nothing edible has been growing for the last hundred miles. In fact, the only cultivated fields we'd seen all day were of poppies, grown for the Chinese opium trade.

Some men form hunting parties. They are warned not to go too far afield. This area is also notorious for bands of the same *Chunchus* who some days ago had killed two of our men.

The hunters return at nightfall with the carcasses of some wild, bushy-tailed cats, a mountain wolf, and several large birds which look like hawks or buzzards. Hungry as I am, I don't share in the feast. Even roasted, the meat smells rank, and I cannot get myself to eat something I don't know.

A day or two later, more bad news. Thirty miles behind us, a train carrying food was blown up by the Japanese. None of *us* had known it was coming, but they did. Now we begin really to feel trapped, surrounded by invisible spies, and full of heartfelt resentment against the enemy.

Meanwhile an engineer has arrived and told the adjutant the bridge can't be repaired. A by-pass will have to be built on pontoons, further downstream. Although no building materials have arrived yet, and the tracks behind us are now torn up as well, we're assured the job will be done in two weeks. All that, without the use of coolie labor, since there is no telling who is a spy. (Although Japan and China were at war only ten years ago, we take for granted all Asiatics will stick together against us.)

Not a man believes we'll be out of here in less than two-three months. I find that by now even the most patriotic Russian blockhead knows that in Fonye's* army nothing ever goes in a straight line.

Soon there isn't even a piece of stale brown bread left to distribute. Several men have already died of actual starvation or related diseases. One of them is a boy I am asked to give a Jewish burial. But no one knows his Jewish name to inscribe on the wooden marker over his grave. We settle on "Velvel, son of Avrohom."

Afterward we try to sleep, in order to forget our hunger. But not even the gravediggers had the strength to get tired enough. An officer comes by and tries to console us. War demands sacrifice. The officers are as starved as we are. If any one of us believes him, he keeps it to himself.

Glasnik, who was not at the funeral, suddenly returns in great excitement. He has scaled the top of a nearby hill and spotted smoke from the chimney of a house deep in the woods. No telling who lives there, of course. It might even be occupied by an enemy patrol. But hope revives us. A house means there must be food. That's worth any risk.

But when it comes to going to investigate, few of my friends feel strong or adventurous enough. Among the five men who end up ready to go, I am obliged to include two Russians, one of them a notorious rapist, which I don't suppose makes much difference in this case.

By now it's beginning to get dark. Some of the men fear we might get lost and fall into enemy hands. (It isn't till after the war that I learn the Japanese, by and large, treated their prisoners quite decently, possibly owing to their ambition to live up to "Western" standards.)

Rather than postpone our venture till morning, when we'd have to share whatever we found with hundreds of others, I propose we go now but take along a machine-gun. This, to us, is still a novel and exciting piece of equipment, and we've always envied those who get the privilege of firing it.

But the sergeant in charge of the machine-guns knows we're on to something, and won't let us have one unless we promise him an equal share of anything we find. I offer to let him come with us. But, like a good capitalist, he wants his profit without having to work for it. We make the deal. But just as we're about to wheel out the gun, an officer turns up and wants to know what's going on. We are forced to make him a partner as well.

Lugging our heavy rapid-fire Maxim gun on its wooden wheels, we push our way into the tangled forest. Whatever glimpses we get of the sky don't give us enough light even to see the nose on our face. By midnight, it's plain we've been going in a circle. There's a short, violent quarrel, then we take our bearings once more and continue on. At a quarter past one I spot a faint glow in the distance.

Now it belatedly occurs to me. Who would live so deep in the woods except the very bandits we'd been warned about? In a sudden ambush, our machine-gun would be worthless. We load our rifles and hold them at hip level, ready to fire, and try to proceed as quietly as we can, although our bayonets keep getting caught in the underbrush. But the longer we walk toward the light, the farther it seems. Glasnik wonders if we're being lured into a trap.

I tell him not to be ridiculous, what do we have that even the poorest bandit would be interested in stealing?

Glasnik points to the machine-gun.

And how do we know they're bandits and not Japanese?

*Fonye is a common Russian nickname.

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But we have gone too far to turn back now. Just before three o'clock we get our first look at the actual house. A small, primitive stone cottage with a thatched roof. We quietly set up the machine-gun at the edge of the clearing, where it can cover the house and all approaches to it.

I volunteer to go ahead of the others and investigate. The house is silent. The chimney is cold, and the light in the window is so pale it might be only a reflection of the moon. But inside, a kerosene lamp is faintly burning, and I can see a broken stove, a pair of high boots which seem stained with blood, and two ancient rifles hanging on the wall.

I signal to the others. Two more join me. Together we burst through the door, our rifles poised to fire. A scrawny, Asiatic woman whose age I find impossible to guess lies snoring on one of the straw mattresses. She doesn't stir at our entrance. We search the room and are delighted to find two bottles of good vodka. Better yet, we open a trunk and find a large loaf of white bread. The two men left with the machine-gun hear us exclaim and come running to join us. There is nearly a fight over dividing the bread. Within moments not a crumb of it remains.

While I try to restore order, the rapist sees the old woman. He is apparently so starved for female companionship, he tears the cover off the bed and, in a typical display of Russian finesse, he throws himself on top of her. She awakens with a scream, dodges under his arm, and lunges for the knife we used for cutting the bread. Then she sees us and drops the knife, crosses herself and begs for mercy. I assure her we've come only for food. She glances at the rapist and is convinced I'm lying. But she gives us a pot of sour milk and goes looking for other food she can let us have.

It seems to me she is searching the house as though she were a stranger here too. But she is probably in a state of shock and forgot where she put things. To help calm her down I send the rapist out to guard the machine-gun.

Minutes later, he sees her hobbling by outside with another pot of sour milk and, crazed with passion, he charges at her once more.

The old woman shrieks like a goat, the sour milk spills, and we all pile on, trying to separate them. After a wild scramble, I get up covered with sour milk and somebody's blood. The rapist apologizes. He says he can't understand what came over him.

We continue to search for food. Deep inside the stove, I find a pan of something that looks like blintzes. We stuff it all into a stocking made of some blanket-like material.

Now, ready to leave, we decide also to take the rifles hanging on the wall. But the woman starts to plead with us, half in gestures, half in Russian. They'll kill her if the rifles are gone. "They?" Who is "they"? Her babbling grows so incoherent, the devil only knows what she's talking about.

But I still don't like to leave rifles where someone could use them to shoot us in the back. We reach for the weapons to make sure at least they're unloaded. The old woman starts to scream again, and suddenly drops to the floor like a stone.

Abruptly sobered and ashamed of ourselves, we pack up to get out of there. It is nearly four in the morning. We assume, whoever "they" are will bury the old woman if she's dead.

But as we start to leave, I find Glasnik has decided to search the chicken coop. Now, in a shaken voice, he calls me over.

Inside, my foot stumbles against something soft on the floor. I strike a match, and we are overcome with horror. Here lie the murdered bodies of a man and a woman, obviously the real owners of this place. He, with the hard hands and stocky build of a woodcutter, has been killed with his own axe.

No wonder the old woman had searched for food as though she didn't know her way around. Her accomplices, then, to whom the rifles belong, cannot be far away.

The rapist is the most indignant. While we're discussing what to do, he goes around acting as though *he'd* suspected the old woman all along. If only we hadn't interfered, he would already have found out everything.

IT IS near dawn, and we are dead tired. But the majority votes to set up an ambush with the machine-gun. None of us has ever fired at a human target. I think that must be part of the attraction. When the bandits return, we will avenge their crimes.

My belly has a pleasant glow of bread and vodka. Yet the whole incident has left a bad taste in my mouth. Perhaps it is true that war turns men into beasts. But I would have preferred for us to start back and leave the punishing to God. We, after all, have stolen too, and perhaps murdered as well. But the two Russians are dying to use the machine-gun.

Day breaks, we're barely able to see straight any longer, and still no sign of the bandits. Maybe they know we're here. By eight o'clock we're ready to give up, when we see nearly a dozen men approach in single file, two of them carrying a quantity of chickens between them on a pole. A fierce and dissolute-looking bunch, armed with rifles, axes, knives. I look at them and know I would have hated to meet them in an open fight.

How glad I am now we have the machine-gun. The bandits cautiously approach the hut. The rapist has his finger curled around the trigger, panting with eagerness to fire a burst. But do I know for certain these are bandits and not merely woodcutters? Have I the right to judge them by their appearance alone? I motion to the rapist to wait another moment. This proves

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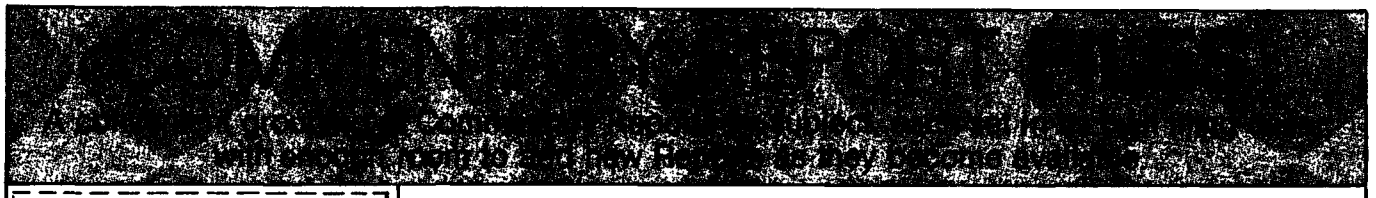
to be a bitter mistake, because there's suddenly a cry of warning. The old woman we had left for dead stands in the door of the hut, waving her arms, shouting.

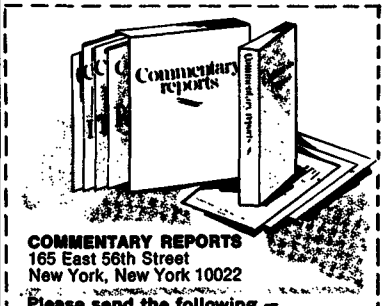
While I stare at her in astonishment, and the rapist foolishly still waits for my signal, the bandits, quick as mice, scatter for cover. Within seconds, they're deployed, crouched behind trees, their rifles searching for targets. That's what I get for being slow to shed blood. Now, even if we'd wanted to leave them in peace, it's too late.

I signal the rapist. He, instead of traversing, fires a long wild burst at the middle of the group. Even so, our opening volley seems to kill or wound nearly half of them. The others, with incredible speed, vanish back into the woods. The old woman too has disappeared. One of their wounded is screaming. The rapist wants to keep on firing, but the gun has already overheated. Across the clearing, the chickens on their pole lie in plain sight. But none of us dares to go fetch them.

We pack up and start running. The heavy wheeled machine-gun slows us down, but, being personally responsible, I refuse to let it be abandoned. We keep looking anxiously behind us, and try to listen for any sound of pursuit. At the same time, of course, we cannot know if they didn't cut ahead of us and set up an ambush.

But no one interferes with us. Perhaps they took us for a larger unit. We pause just long enough to fill ourselves with water from a spring and to finish every last one of the blintzes. I have some regrets now about leaving the chickens, but at least we've made sure there is nothing left for the sergeant and the officer waiting like capitalists for their unearned share. In that small way we feel we have struck a blow for the Revolution.





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Observations

Discords in the Music of Time

Herbert Howarth

MEN are received at their own valuation. By undertaking a chronicle of the last fifty years, by drawing out the tale to ten volumes, each of them, however, slim as a wafer, and by the cultivation of an artificial prose, in which sentences are de-accelerated under the grip of subordinate clauses, Anthony Powell has claimed to be the British Proust.* He has been greeted by a happy noise of critics. "I would rather read Mr. Powell than any English novelist now writing," said Kingsley Amis. If we take the comment seriously (not that Amis is often to be taken seriously), this is a crushing stricture on the contemporary British novel.

Early in this century it became the choice task of the novelist to write the record of his own epoch. "I wanted the Novelist," said Ford Madox Ford, recalling his preparations for *Parade's End*, "to appear in his really proud position as historian of his own time." Ford fathered a generation of chroniclers. C. P. Snow has just completed his English annals, Henry Williamson and Powell are hastening toward the completion of theirs. No chronicler of the modern world is hampered by lack of material. Any man who has suffered a long life has seen enough, public and private, to write comedy, tragedy, and epic—if he has the capability. Life is so vicious, said Juvenal, that anger will do the writing without the help of talent. But that was a way of emphasizing the depth of vice in which Rome waded; and in fact it reminds us of what it pretends to deny, that if you would write the annals of your time you must have both the conscience to hate the story and the talent to tell it. Henry Williamson, for all his quirks, has the conscience and the talent, though it may be that the result has eluded him despite these gifts. Snow has them—in far insufficient degree. It is questionable whether Powell has them. The men Ford fathered scarcely inherit the cogency, the grace, the indignation of their begetter.

BEFORE I approach the total character of Powell's work, let me test him by his seventh, eighth, and ninth novels. They deal with World War II, which was the common central experience of his generation and mine. Before reading *The Valley of Bones* I would have said that it was impossible for a writer of my epoch addressing a reader of my epoch to be boring about World War II. We grew up aware for ten years that the cloud of war was moving in; when it broke we suffered the disarray of our private lives and relationships, our plans and hopes; saw a number of our friends destroyed; watched a few of them jump quickly to the top by the opportunities of battle or its intricate preliminaries and by-play. Contriving the impossible, *The Valley of Bones* is dull on this very theme, and *The Soldier's Art* almost equally dull. Various small indications suggest that Powell had Evelyn Waugh's trilogy, for his model. Waugh's consummate liaison of sentimentality and concision is a measure of the impotence of Powell's military writing.

Certainly there are flashes of success even in this segment of the chronicle. A decade ago Lionel Trilling recalled that the novel should, among other duties, carry news: surprising and enlightening information brought in by the explorer-novelist from *terra incognita*. A war novelist or a political novelist surveying the events of 1939-45 must give the truth of the action and the truth of the currents of feeling eddying through riven Europe, must give the reality behind the propaganda, the reality behind the silences. From a regular flat level of writing, which results from an emptiness of vista, though admirers, confusing matter and style, call it underwriting, Powell occasionally rises to elicit the experiences of the British army, of the jostling administrators and agencies, of the civilians bombed in the cities or waiting it out in the rural districts. His liveliest episode lets light in on a crisis that threatened the Belgians shortly after the liberation of their country: the young men of the Resistance, hardened by their struggle against the Germans in the long Occupation days, now restive under the old men restored by the Allies;

HERBERT HOWARTH, *who died late last year, was a member of the English department of the University of Pennsylvania. A poet, essayist, and longtime contributor to* COMMENTARY, *Mr. Howarth, a native of England, was the author of* Notes on Some Figures Behind T. S. Eliot, Images from the Arab World, *and other works.*

* Of the twelve projected volumes in the series, ten have appeared so far: *A Question of Upbringing, A Buyer's Market, The Acceptance World* (collected in one volume, *A Dance to the Music of Time: First Movement*, Little, Brown, 718 pp., $7.50); *At Lady Molly's, Casanova's Chinese Restaurant, The Kindly Ones* (*A Dance to the Music of Time: Second Movement*, Little, Brown, 722 pp., $8.50); *The Valley of Bones, The Soldier's Art, The Military Philosophers* (*A Dance to the Music of Time: Third Movement*, Little, Brown, 715 pp., $8.95), and *Books Do Furnish a Room* (Little, Brown, 241 pp., $5.95).

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Montgomery vowing to shoot them up if they make trouble on his lines of communication. This seizes our interest. It happened twenty-five years ago, but is still news: a typical patch of human mess caught under the novelist's microscope.

WITH the Belgian incident and the moment of life it breathes into the fiction, we may turn to the general problem of Powell's chronicle and its image of society. Brussels invents a solution for the young Resistance fighters: thirty thousand of them shall be shipped to England, given military training there, and the activity and the change of scene will satisfy their energies. But it must be done without delay before the local situation explodes; and it can only be done without delay if Whitehall makes rapid decisions. Powell has already shown, skillfully enough, that there is a bureaucrat at the center of the Allied affairs web psychotically bent on delaying every decision by manipulation of all the rules-to-be-worked-to. We appreciate that he will delay the transfer of the Belgians by disputing where to get the shipping, where to put them, who pays. Only Churchill's word can blast the obstacles out of the way and get the thing done fast. Churchill's word is obtained. How? By the intercession of the business complex. A benign sensible-headed Belgian industrialist talks to a benign British industrialist, who has direct access to Churchill and uses it. Business-sanity and business-power are the solvents. You may perhaps imagine, reading the last two sentences, that Powell shows that this is so simply because it is truth, which is a novelist's preoccupation, and that he does not color the narrative with any rejoicing. But he rejoices and makes us rejoice. Sentimental pleasure glows at the episode.

This corresponds with the main sentimental-political drive of the whole *A Dance to the Music of*—of What? Not of Time. That title is only a bid for a variant of Proust's title. But of Power. Jenkins and his friends are dancing to the music of the power of money, power of rank, power of those who have always been in and are determined to stay there, power of those who are determined to climb in with them. It is "A Dance to the Eton Boat Song." The series begins in the paragon of elite schools. The Etonians are shown in all their folly, charm, and resourcefulness. As novel succeeds novel we learn—and this is not news, but the repetition of a bitter truth—that Eton still ramifies everywhere and holds and pulls the ropes of office and command.

"All the old gang was back—Dame Alison's Mob." The rage of Osborne's Jimmy Porter, the rage of Wesker's East End family, had nothing to do with the Welfare State (it was a curious error of academic critics a few years ago to think that it had). It was the anger of the 50's at the discovery that the election of the British Labour party to office in 1945 had done nothing to change the system of government of the people by the Establishment. "All the old gang was back." The Labour party had been infiltrated on the eve of the 1945 election by the cleverer sons of the Establishment, who had discerned that the immediate way to power lay through the Left wing. If the long-time Labourites, who had come up from the people through the Trade Unions, secured some of the higher ministerial posts, they found themselves coddled, flattered, managed, and eventually led like babies, by their permanent officials from the elite schools. How tough the elite dynasties are: flexible, adaptable, a collective Talleyrand; always governing Britain, whatever party may reign, whatever ideology sweeps the voters. Among the values which any reader must concede to Powell's shelf of novels, one must be that it strikingly records this phenomenon. Osborne records it, shouting angrily; Wesker records it with grief; Powell sets it down with complacency as evidence of the tenacity of his own species.

EDWARDIAN generals and captains, who in other writers might be merely figures of fun, are to Powell sources of energy, models of the art of life. General Conyers, with his dashing past (rode in the cavalry charge at the Modder River), his alert interest in the present, his unfeigned and unfatigued curiosity (keeps up with Aleister Crowley and Freud), his active glands (remarries at eighty), is Powell's hero. Behind the soldiers, invisible but numinous, is the glow of the Throne. Powell teases and titillates his audience with rumors of the interior of "Buck House" and its royal concerns and ceremonials. Using the sanctions of the comic mode, he draws a monarchy at once grand and democratic, ritualistic and human. We are to understand, not by precept but in the pleasures of a pseudo-Proustian crepitation, that the Army, the Throne, the Businessmen, and the Expensive School are the bastions of England, and that we shall be monstrous unless, with a laugh, a cheer, and a moist eye, we urge the aristocracy to go on aristocrating.

What P. G. Wodehouse does for the aristocracy with candid frivolity and nonsense, Powell does with the conventional hieroglyphics of the arts. And evidently there are men and women everywhere who find the liturgy of the charmed circle, and behind-the-arras revelations of the private lives of the titled and privileged, irresistible. General Conyers dropping his eyeglass at St. James's and afraid he will drop his axe too if he stoops to recover it, Lady Frederica braving the sales to buy a cheap black dress because "so many royalties nearing their century, we're bound to be in mourning again soon," Lord Warminster and his fumbling essays in socialism, are apparently as enchanting as if time had stood still. Irresistible to know that Lord Amesbury in knee breeches and the Garter, on his way to a Court ball, sits down to scrambled eggs with Lady Molly and the vet who doctors her cat: to succumb to Powell's indication that the best members of the elite are capable of valuing individuals for themselves and taking tea with and talking sense to men of all degrees. Such a capacity is charming. It is very nearly human. But we are to feel the charm of the unbending precisely because

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we feel that awe of the height from which they unbend. Antique title, antique name, archaic custom, these are signs of power. If the wearers were not so considerably unassuming, we might char to cinder in the radiation of their power. Nine-tenths of *A Dance to the Music of Time* is snobbery, tendered as comedy. It has found willing buyers.

A RESPONSIBLE chronicler of England would have to deal at least equally with a very different side of English life. The Education Acts passed by British Parliaments in the 19th century produced their first effective results in the first decade of this century. Over the time-span of Powell's narrative the results steadily increased quantitatively and qualitatively. New men, children of the lower-middle class and the working class, percolated into the domains long reserved for, long controlled by, the Establishment: into government and local government; into the professions; into the arts. D. H. Lawrence was one of the first to compel public notice (that is why he is today the culture hero of British universities, and especially the so-called red-brick universities, which are in fact the new-architecture universities). In the 20's they were to be met at Oxford. Powell's Jenkins was bound to find them there, and in the career world afterward was bound to come up against a few of them as competitors, if handicapped competitors. Powell has not made much room for them in his *Dance*. But he takes account of one of them as a method of disposing of all: tells how he met J. C. Quiggin. Somerset Maugham greeted the angry writers of the 50's with the word "scum." Is Powell's picture of Quiggin better than Maugham's malediction? Disregarding the hard work of the Education-Acts men in general, and seemingly acquainted with none of those who went through Oxford to do honest jobs in the Civil Service, the schools, even the world of print, he condenses the whole class into the Quiggin caricature, squeezing and distorting this till it becomes grotesque yet formidable, till it declares the whole class offensive. Do not suppose that every heir of the Establishment felt like Somerset Maugham or Powell. In the universities between the two wars there were persons who, enjoying all the Establishment advantages, extended a handsome generosity to the Education-Acts entrants. But Powell's Jenkins, that master of the tactful voice, who, in the dialogue of the novels, regularly says the decent noncommittal thing, conceals under his quiet manner an unsympathetic resistance to the shoal of new men.

Two or three non-Establishment figures in the series are treated with good temper: Bithell, Jeavons's brother, Jeavons himself. Yes, but it is instructive to look at the most fully drawn of these three. Jeavons, not Establishment by pedigree, "not a gent," as he nicely puts it, moves among the upper ten thousand because he has married Lady Molly, who discovered him when he was polishing cars at the Motor Show. His good sense when he talks, his good sense in staying silent when he has nothing to say, are perfect. Jenkins likes him, General Conyers likes him and takes his advice on shirts. Lord Amesbury likes him and takes his advice on the thoroughly Establishment matter of "the economics of estate management." His success has a twofold explanation. One is that he has unconsciously assimilated the social outlook of his wife: he can in all honesty discuss Lord Bridgenorth's bad luck in having "a rackety daughter"; he has become upper class by osmosis. The other is his innocence of education. To all intents and purposes he is analphabet. These virtues save him for Powell. What Jenkins would never be so brash as to declare, but feels in his depths and may hear some alter ego pronounce in his worst dreams, is "I can bear the lower classes so long as they don't read." The reading, exam-writing, review-writing lower classes are Powell's competitors; and therefore the brutishness, chicanery, tergiversations, which they certainly evince, but no more so than the Establishment chaps, are held and chronicled against them.

But what if Widmerpool is brought into this analysis? Powell's friends might say: "Accuse Powell of snobbery! Why, here is Stringham, an Etonian, content to serve in the army as Mess Waiter or clerk in a laundry-unit! And here is Widmerpool, another Etonian, chosen for the bad man of the sequence: at once buffoon, despot, and success! What snobbery is there in the step-by-step exposure of the criminality of Widmerpool?"

WIDMERPOOL is the key to the whole series. He is designated in the first volume (which trespasses on that outplayed genre, the Public School novel) as the Enemy. He is always ridiculous and increasingly vile. At Eton we see him through the eyes of his fellows as an absurd misfit: a man symbolically wrong, since he arrived at school "wearing the wrong kind of overcoat." Always straining for success in sports, huffing and puffing in the rear of the runners, he never quite makes any team. Denied honors and friendship in school, he is determined to prevail in the world, and prevails by obstinate endurance of a shower of preliminary knocks and insults, while he forces himself upward by unremitting hard work. The war gives him the opportunities it gave many a careerist, and by 1945 he is a colonel, wears a decoration, is one of the select guests at the Victory Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's, and is scheming for a position of political control in Africa. In the course of his ascent he has seized on the school contemporaries who once found him funny and has made them pay. Among these is the narrator, Nick Jenkins, who is let off lightly: Widmerpool picks his name from a list of available subalterns, has him posted to his own office, overworks and bullies him, and then ditches him. For Peter Templer he has a deeper hatred, and for the charming and nonchalant Stringham, the deepest hatred. He "puts up a paper" which gets Templer, doing cloak-and-dagger work, abandoned and murdered in a Balkan country. He has Stringham transferred to a laundry-unit, because he knows the unit is under orders to sail for

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Singapore; and when Stringham dies in a Southeast Asian prison camp, he marries Stringham's niece to lay paws on his money.

Powell does not regard his portrait of Widmerpool as a criticism of the Etonian world through which his formidable character passed. He regards Widmerpool at Eton and Quiggin at Oxford as accidents, changelings, ugly ducklings deposited in a milieu where they do not belong. Look at Widmerpool's fingernails, says Powell: "His hands were small and gnarled, with nails worn short and cracked, as if he spent his spare time digging with them deep down into the soil." In due course he explains that Widmerpool's father was a supplier of liquid manure. Instead of interpreting Widmerpool like a psychotherapist, he damns him like the Somerset Maugham of the 50's—not so concisely, but with the same malevolence.

The invention of Widmerpool takes the punch out of the satire that a chronicler must write against a nation's managers. Ford and Waugh exposed the vices of office with an Augustan pungency. Powell shows vice and folly in operation, but by focusing them in Widmerpool he attributes the mistakes and meannesses of his time to the "scum" who crept and intruded and climbed into the elite fold where they didn't fit. He declines to face the fact—which Ford always faced, and Waugh, despite the charges of snobbery brought against him, stubbornly faced in his mature work—that the intriguers' messes and the brutal decisions are made by the insiders: by Etonians and others entrenched in the Establishment; by heirs of old names, by the crafty among them, not only by the aggressive, but also by those quieter numbers who move modestly through Powell's pages.

A QUALIFICATION must be added here in justice to Powell. There flickers across his narrative a series of allusions to the "will." "Will" is the vital force, the secret of success. It can be seen in its most apparent form in eminent military leaders: it flashes from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff as he walks down a street or into a conference room, flashes in an electric dazzle curiously reminiscent of Hardy's Immanent Will playing in the brain of Napoleon. To those who have it in abundance, the less well-endowed give way, sometimes with a gratified consent, sometimes resenting. Now these allusions appear, on the evidence available by the end of Volume 9, to be sporadic outbursts of an intuition which has not been examined, clarified, or confirmed into a system. Powell has observed the phenomenon of the victorious will, but has not yet come to relate it to the total movement of his chronicle. Above all, he has not decided how to adjust it to his social bias. He sees it in a great general and admires it. But he also sees it in Widmerpool, even to a minor degree in Quiggin, and there, while he confesses its strength, he deplores the results. In Charles Stringham he sees an utter deficiency of it: Stringham opts out of the Establishment and all its congenital advantages. And Powell is tempted to arrange Stringham as a second Sebastian Flyte and to make him, as Waugh made that charmer, a saint of our time. Powell looks in several directions and is not sure which way to go. On balance, he has to praise the "will," even if it lets interlopers in among the English elite, has to praise it because he too is possessed of it: in him it is the staying-power, the typing-power, to convert his epic from mere ambition to the achievement of print.

To make much of the Widmerpool case is, admittedly, to take seriously a character one of whose functions is to provide the comedy of the chronicle. It is true that Widmerpool is occasionally good for a laugh: trying to persuade himself of the propriety of premarital intercourse with his man-eating fiancee, and then in headlong flight from the sheets. But where Powell's comedy is organic (it is sometimes mere costume-jewelry—witness Kernével's story of *le prince des cons*), it supports his ideology. Even Widmerpool's fiasco with Mildred is part of the dossier compiled against him; it is a blackball to keep him and kindred usurpers out of the Club, since they can't do their bit with the Establishment nymphs.

In general, however, *A Dance to the Music of Time* is not so squirmingly funny as the reviewers profess. Powell thinks Widmerpool with the crystals in his hair fantastic enough to be remembered from book to book and to be used as a recurring motif: "Barbara Goring once poured sugar over his head at a ball of the Huntercombs." The sugar cascade is scarcely above the slapstick of the Three Stooges.

A PERVASIVE fault of the *Dance* is to represent itself as more than it is and to lose touch with what it might legitimately be. There are signs, for example, that some of Powell's permanent images were formed by the silent movies of the early 20's: by the silent version of Barrie's *The Admirable Crichton*, by Rudolph Valentino in *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. Why not? Someone will eventually show how everyone who grew up in the early 20's has been indelibly etched with the images of these films, and *The Prisoner of Zenda, Resurrection, The Corsair, Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall, Metropolis*, etc. *The Four Horsemen* colors Powell's sixth volume which is concerned with the approach of war, and if that title had been planted on the volume the debt would have been acknowledged and the proper associations most fully mobilized. Instead Powell calls it *The Kindly Ones*, which is a cultural claim, an attempt to line up in the neo-classical procession after O'Neill and Eliot. O'Neill and Eliot at least made their Furies what Aeschylus made his, harriers of guilt, projections of remorse for wrongs done. Powell scarcely tells how the war of 1939-45 was the outcome of crimes. All he means is that war is a scourge, which is what the movie and Ibañez meant.

Yes, there is too much push to be too much of somebody else. At one moment Powell is being Eliot the ritualist, at another Proust the intricate or Proust the jealous.

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It is no adequate desire for a writer in the second half of the 20th century to repeat what Proust did in the first quarter. And Powell has only the shreds of the Proustian equipment. Proust's sense of social relationships is at once panoramic and close, epic and miniaturist. He writes the natural history of upper-class France. Powell knows this, being —it gleams through the interstices of his faulty fiction—a good critic with an eye for another artist's performance. He knows how the syntax of Proust's far-protracted descriptions kinesthetizes the dynamics of life and the pleasure of the author's realization of the indivisible structure of all the experience in the world. He knows this and works for comparable effects, but they do not come. Readers cannot be convinced that the world is indivisible by the interposition of foresight and hindsight clauses: "As I was later to know," "as I even then dimly discerned." Passage after passage in Proust is a new organization, a shape as complex and functional as a wild-bees' nest built where two boughs cross. Powell's syntheses are neither complicated nor new. Even the title, *A Dance to the Music of Time*, while at first blush is fresh in its appeal to Poussin's picture, is a revamping of the perception of the dance configuration underlying human activity—the perception of which was new in Yeats and Eliot when they divined the meaning of the library work of Frazer and the soundsight of Russian opera and ballet and inaugurated the literature of the anthropological age, the literature of "ritual," new fifty years ago but now a commonplace, every repetition of it a mere marking of time till another innovative writer thrusts away at a tangent. Powell represents the slowing-down of a familiar movement in a worn groove.

This shows clearly if Pasternak's intuition of the form of life is contrasted with Powell's. Both authors agree that the path of a man through life intersects again and again with the paths of certain other men. Pasternak sees the patterns delineated by these meetings as instances of the biological forms which are the bases of nature—forms which the artist is working to reflect. Powell's image of the figures of the dance, in which partners are conducted, released, pass to other partners, find each other again, pass on again, is essentially equivalent; but the equivalence is lost in the over-bland tone, the false classicism, the indifference to biology, the focus on the socially exclusive. Translate the intersection of Powell's characters into practical terms, and from Pasternak's world of all men you are brought back sharply to Powell's world of the elite: "The Club is everywhere, the select Club. If you belong, you will bump into co-members repeatedly; you and they will be running all the enterprises."

Some things Powell does well. He makes pretty allusions to artists and their works, ranging the centuries and the schools with ease; fetches lively episodes out of musical history; quotes felicitously from minor poets. In these agreeable respects his novels are a Palgrave, a Baedeker, a young don's breviary. He has a taste for words, which improves in efficacy as the novels proceed. He stiffens his pages with some attractive economical usages, redolent of the Augustinianisms of Evelyn Waugh: "Yet, although where unfaithfulness reigns, ignorance may be preferable to knowledge, at the same time, once knowledge is brutally born, exactitude is preferable to uncertainty." On the other hand, he is capable of writing "the inexorable hand of Fate."

What he would wish to be found doing extremely well, and what he does with some success, is the dissection of love, which a number of novelists of our time and the time preceding ours have made their prime business. He is concerned to observe the details and define the laws of the experience of falling in love, being in love, reconstructing and re-examining past love. The truth of a girl's feelings and actions as compared with her pretexts is a favorite focus of post-Proustian narrative. It may come in Nabokov's glutinous mix or Powell's thin dilution. We are not utterly astounded when Jenkins learns that what Jean Duport really wanted when she left him to return to her husband was not domesticity or the good of her child but a ticket to South America, where her new lover was bound. But it is interesting enough; we read the revelations with engagement instead of with the impatience, and sometimes the exasperated scorn, that Uncle Giles or the Sillery caricature or the Quiggin passages provoke. Occasionally Powell's aphorisms are neat: "When it comes to behaving badly women can give you a point or two every time." Occasionally they are captivating: ". . . making a fool of himself in public . . . a merit women are perhaps quicker to appreciate than men." One or two are calculated to cheer us all up:

> Are you hideous, stunted, mentally arrested, sexually maladjusted, marked with warts, gross in manner, with a cleft palate and an evil smell? . . . You're all set for a promising career as a lover. There's an absolutely ravishing girl round the corner who'll find you irresistible. In fact her knickers are bursting into flame at this moment at the mere thought of you.

These sallies deserve recollection now and then. But the novels need something more of action, something more of imagination, something that is seldom there. Durrell can invent extravagances good enough to answer and outstrip expectation. Can Powell?

To name him with Durrell is to see the gulf that separates him from the livelier students of love of these last twenty years. The sexuality of our time reaches in one direction toward clinicism, in an effort to escape the burden of emotions and the burden of morals; in the other it reaches toward religion. On the whole, the second of these two drives is the more pervasive and the more urgent. Even those who borrow the clinical tone and assert the end beyond morality are really pressing with religious conviction to a religious fulfillment. "A man and woman are coupling in the street," says

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the Greek in Yeats's *Resurrection*. "She thinks the surrender to some man the dance threw into her arms may bring her god back to life." The leading novelist spokesmen of the old-new mysticism are Miller, Durrell, and Mailer with their sadism and tenderness; Nabokov with his prurience and energy; Iris Murdoch with her permutations (let the characters of a novel be arranged and rearranged so that everyone connects sexually with everyone). Whether the performance of the ceremonies will in fact lead to the materialization of the dream is another matter. But if literature is to simulate the ceremonies at all, it must simulate them with the far invention and the verbal athleticism of a Durrell. You cannot underplay or underwrite if this is the dance you venture into. Durrell probably did not know Powell's books or intend any allusion to them when he wrote in *Clea* of the thin fare which the then current novelists—shall we say, the Snows?—provided. Powell can be added by the reader ten years later. *A Dance to the Music of Time* will never impel a carnival or drive a girl wild enough to conceive a god.

Powell does not wish it. "Stupid people," he says, "always suppose that some possible alternative will make the human condition more bearable. The only hope of survival is the realization that no such thing could possibly happen." This is the moral outcome of Powell's experience, a willing acquiescence in the best of all possible worlds, a gratified declaration of stoicism enlivened by curiosity, easy to make if a man is born into an order in which, while necessarily vulnerable to the pains universal to the human condition, he is daily compensated by all the amenities nutritious and decorative. Arthur Mizener once found in Powell an imagination not "frustrated like Hardy's by a doctrinal commitment." But, unless the word "dogma" is to be reserved for views held by liberals, Powell's "only hope of survival" is dogma: conservative dogma.

To DEFINE a writer or his work as conservative is no literary censure. If less than half of England's best writers have been conservative, their conservatism has often been difficult, bracing, close-matted. The objection to Powell's is that it is thin. The books which it generates stand in the same relation to Poussin's *Dance* as the prose of a museum director's report does to the Masters of whom he is the prudential guardian.

Journey of a Poet

Irving Howe

EXACTLY fifty-two years ago Jacob Glatstein published a sparkling piece of impudence called *"A Shnel-Loif iber der Idisher Poezie"* (roughly, "A Quick Tour of Yiddish Poetry"), in which he slashed away at his poetic elders with the recklessness of a young man determined to incite the anger of those he most admires. When he died last November at the age of seventy-five, generally recognized as a major Yiddish poet, Glatstein was writing from the very center of Yiddish life, or at least what remained of it. Since the end of the Second World War he had taken upon himself the role of national-cultural spokesman, in journalism with polemical harshness and in poetry with creative force. Was this, one wonders, still another instance of that familiar rhythm by which a writer starts with rebellion and ends with acceptance? Not quite; for the circumstances of Yiddish writing these past fifty years have been so extreme as to call into question the usual categories of criticism.

In his *"Shnel-Loif"* Glatstein attacked the older Yiddish poets for their tendentiousness, their enslavement to social and national themes, their failure to project a distinctive first-person voice, their acquiescence in a "singing" lyricism which deprived Yiddish poetry of intellectual bite and cosmopolitan daring. The Yiddish poet, asked Glatstein, "Who is he? What is the color of his soul . . . of his despair and exaltation? . . . A pity that our writers regard themselves as missionaries, mere blind instruments, servants of the folk, its consoler and awakener."

With such young fellow poets as Leyeles and Minkoff, who together formed the *In Zikh* group, Glatstein called for a revolution in sensibility that we now recognize as modernism—the assault on rationalistic decorum, the claim that self-consciousness has an inherent value, the premise that urban turmoil is the proper locale for poetry, the impatience with fixed forms, received modes, binding traditions. Through Glatstein and his friends there entered into Yiddish poetry free verse, Whitmanesque rumination, personal outcry, nervousness of rhythm.

AT THE time Glatstein wrote his *"Shnel-Loif"* Yiddish poetry was dominated by *Di Yunge*, a group that a decade earlier had also declared itself as rebellious, with Mani Leib, Landau, and Iceland mocking the earlier sweatshop poets ("the rhyme department of the labor movement," Landau called them) and insisting upon the autonomy of the aesthetic work. But *Di Yunge* tended to dilute the aesthetic with aestheticism; their poems, refined as none had ever before been in Yiddish, were also

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a little pale; their impulse, even though most of them were shop workers, was to withdraw from the vulgar energies of "the Jewish street." *Di Yunge* drew upon late 19th-century Russian and German poetry; *In Zikh* was closer to the modernism then entering American literature. *Di Yunge* had little connection with English as literature or language; Glatstein had gone, as an immigrant boy, to New York University and had begun to read American poets. His rebellion against *Di Yunge* had as its tacit purpose to bring Yiddish poetry into the mainstream of modern literature; the *In Zikh* manifesto declares: "We are Yiddish poets by virtue of the fact that we are Jews and write in Yiddish. Whatever a Yiddish poet may write about is *ipso facto* Yiddish. One does not need specifically Jewish themes. . . ."

By now this may seem commonplace (in fact, so commonplace as to warrant doubt); to the older Yiddish poets it was heresy. For years the leading Yiddish critic, S. Niger, would spar uneasily with Glatstein, unable to decide which mattered to him more, Glatstein's evident mastery of Yiddish idiom or his dubious literary ideas.

IT WAS fortunate that Glatstein and his friends tried to bring Yiddish poetry into the mainstream of modern literature; it was at least as fortunate that they did not quite succeed. For the ultimate strength of Yiddish writing—from Sholem Aleichem to I. B. Singer, from Reisen to Manger, from Peretz to Glatstein—rests in its distinctiveness, what its detractors regard as its Jewish parochialism. Whenever Yiddish writers have tried programmatically to become "universal" in outlook, they have failed, or produced weak carbons of what we already have in the West. Yiddish romanticism is not the same as the romanticism of European culture. Yiddish modernism, precisely because it is Yiddish and therefore tied to a particular destiny, can never be as free, unburdened, gratuitous (or irresponsible) as the modernism of Europe and America. To be sure, it is this historical distinctiveness that also accounts for the special failures of Yiddish writing: its lugubriousness, its self-protectiveness, its threadbare declamatoriness. But whatever lives in Yiddish takes its strength mainly from indigenous sources, more the Bible than Baudelaire, more Hasidism than expressionism, more the integral values of *Yiddishkeit* than any contemporary doctrine.

AMONG Yiddish writers there has been a constant straining to break past traditional limits of subject matter. Glatstein, for example, introduced a subjective first-person voice into his work that Yiddish had hardly known before; he wrote about his own emotions, his own experiences. Like other Yiddish poets of his generation, he insisted upon the right to shake off the burdens of the folk and the curse of history. In a poetry overcrowded with arias, he brought the rasping freshness of recitative.

And for a time it must have seemed that he had achieved his goal. He wrote, in a superb poem like *"Klayne Nakht-Muzik,"* objectified vignettes and reflections that remind one a little of Wallace Stevens; he brought to Yiddish poetry a sharper intellectual thrust than it had usually had; he did not hesitate to discipline the melodic line of his verse to the demands of his thought. By all appearances, then, Glatstein was a modernist poet.

Yet the very need felt by almost every generation of Yiddish poets to struggle for individual sensibility testifies to the power and persistence of collective fate. In the end, the luxury of choice would be denied to them, quite as much to Glatstein as to the more traditional Yiddish poets; all had to bow before the ghastliness of their time. The idea of an autotelic or autonomous literature, sought by group after group of Yiddish poets, would seemingly be found, only to turn into a chimera. No choice remained but to come back, with blessing or curse, to the themes of the fathers.

In his earlier years Glatstein wrote almost every kind of short poem that is possible to the modern imagination; yet even in these poems, with their supple free verse and sardonic individuality of tone, it is perfectly clear—at least now, if not forty years ago—that one is reading a poet in the central line of the Yiddish tradition. Just as Mani Leib kept listening for the footsteps of Elijah and Moishe Leib Halpern kept echoing Purim theatricality, so Glatstein achieved some of his most brilliant successes in dramatic monologues spoken by Hasidic sages, poems that are wonderfully crisp and witty. The Yiddish critic, A. Tabachnik, has made the point well: "The more modern our poetry became in form, the more Jewish it became in spirit." Perhaps that is what literary tradition is all about, that it nourishes even those who rebel against it.

FOR some years tradition worked upon Glatstein, in ways neither he nor his opponents could entirely perceive; then he turned consciously back to tradition. After the Holocaust only a few first-rank Yiddish poets remained, and it soon fell to Glatstein's lot—not his alone, of course—to speak for his culture. He did this least impressively in his journalism (to be distinguished from his literary criticism, which is often superb). His occasional pieces were composed with passion, force, and sometimes, I think, blindness. In his journalism Glatstein saw himself as a defender, one of the very last, of the Yiddish word; he felt himself to be speaking for the honor of a shattered people; and he gave no quarter, accepted no compromise, refused to see the kinds of qualifications that in his poetry he saw as a matter of course. It now seems to me that in his position he really had no other choice: he wished to restore morale, assuage embittered hearts, relieve the humiliation every Yiddish reader felt. Often he seemed excessive, as in his raging attacks on Boris Pasternak for the passages about Jewishness in *Doctor Zhivago*. But to say this is to respond from a certain distance, not fully to enter into the reality of Yiddish life after the Holocaust.

Sometimes a note of ferocity

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crept into Glatstein's poems also, as in a rasp called "Brokers," in which he addresses himself to the "dear Jewish children," and tells them not to serve as brokers between the world and the Jews. Better that "you leave us alone/ and go to all the devils/ in the arms of your own/ black fear." But in the main this was not the tone of Glatstein's Holocaust poems, which are, I think, his greatest achievement and among the very few bodies of literary work that begin to cope with the subject.

Social-national poet he might now have become, and at the very center of the Yiddish tradition too, yet it is notable that in his Holocaust poems Glatstein retained the personal voice with which he had begun as an *In Zikh* poet, at once stern and sardonic, quiet and beyond grief. The platform rhetoric that has been so frequent and disastrous an element in Yiddish literature is rarely present in Glatstein's poetry, and even when it is, it appears with some ironic or mocking intent. In the Holocaust poems, Glatstein continues the Yiddish tradition of direct speech with God, a blindingly affectionate quarrel in which the demand for justice, or at least for explanation, is never allowed to lapse. "*Ver vet dikh kholemen/ Ver gedenken?/ Ver vet dikh laykenen/ Ver vet dikh benken?*" (Who will dream you? Who remember? Who will deny you? Who yearn for you?) The God that figures in these poems is hardly the omnipotent One of traditional belief, yet neither is He the factitious construct of modern religiosity; He is an indestructible presence in Jewish life, beyond acceptance or denial. "*Der Got fun mein umgloybn iz prekhtig*" (the God of my disbelief is magnificent)—this was as far as he could go in reconciliation; the anger and the sheer helpless incomprehension remained. "*Di Toire hobn mir mkabl geven baym Sinai, / Un in Lublin hobn mir zi opgegebn/ Nisht di maysm loibn Got.*" (The Torah we received at Sinai, and at Lublin we gave it back. Corpses do not praise God.)

Jacob Glatstein was a major, perhaps a great, poet, even though the world did not know him and is never likely to. His pride was his defense, and his vanity the cost he paid for pride. He could not have fulfilled the task he set himself without that shield of pride, and in the lonely condition of his later years it was inevitable that now and then the pride should decline into vanity.

He was always open, often sharp, sometimes difficult. We quarreled once about Philip Roth, and now I suspect he had the better of the quarrel. We argued another time about Cynthia Ozick's story, "Envy; or, Yiddish in America,"* which he read as an assault on Yiddish writers at a moment when they were all but defenseless. I suggested the story was really written out of affection, and eyes blazing, he turned to me, "Do you think it is *affection* we need?"

But when we spoke of the world that for him had become sacred through blood and neglect, he could be warm, quick, and witty. If every record of Yiddish life were lost, he once told me, a future archeologist could reconstruct it all from the stories of Reisen. But could he learn from Reisen so elementary a fact as how the Jews had perpetuated themselves, I asked? For that, shot back Glatstein, he would do better to go to the Bible.

FROM Yiddish writers like Glatstein and his friend Eliezer Greenberg one could learn a great deal, not only about the tradition they represent but also about the courage men can have in standing by their values. To American culture Glatstein brought, as Greenberg still does, an acerbic view that was often valuable for its deflationary skepticism. One evening lives in my memory, at Greenberg's apartment, where he and Glatstein began to speak with the same skepticism, but also with the joy of recollection, about their youthful world. For a few hours it seemed as if it all had come alive, and would never end.

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* COMMENTARY, November 1969.

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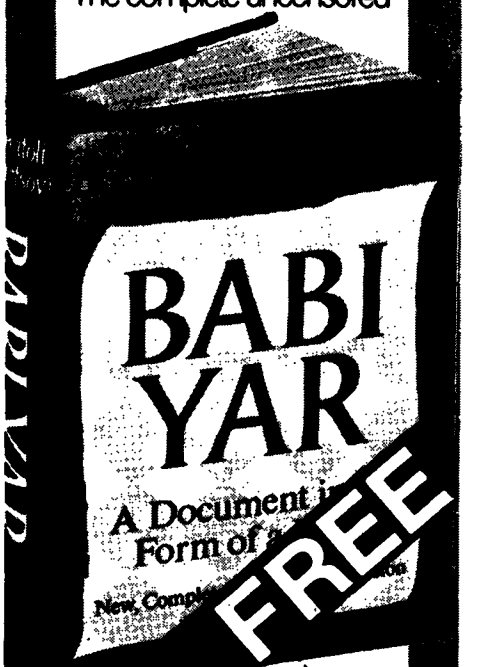

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Youth; Manhood; Middle Age

William S. Pechter

SOME TIME in late 1965, I was crossing the Golden Gate Bridge by car when the driver (one of the new Talmudists of rock music, into whose hands I had commended my education after returning from a year in England and finding the music I'd spent all that year avoiding was the new intellectual rage) turned to me and remarked of the record being played on the radio (the Rolling Stones's "Under My Thumb") that it was the greatest song of its genre. What was its genre?, I earnestly inquired, to which he solemnly replied, "Music to listen to while driving in a car." In a sense, *Two-Lane Blacktop* is a movie to watch while driving in a car, and not just because it happens to be about being in cars and driving. Like a certain kind of good pop music, it has the qualities of being both easily and immediately enjoyable and utterly expendable: an object to be consumed. In a way that I don't find contemptible, it is thoroughly mindless, and, in a way that I rather admire, it never loses its cool.

The characters in the film are a pair of longhair street racers, a driver and a mechanic, in their '55 Chevy, a straight who is baited into competing with them in his GTO, and an aimless girl hitchhiker who drifts from one car to the other. The director of the film is Monte Hellman, who has a reputation of a sort I'm suspicious of for having directed (in association with Jack Nicholson before Nicholson's fame) two Westerns (*The Shooting* and *Ride the Whirlwind*), as yet unreleased here but highly regarded in Europe. My suspicion, based on talk of Hellman's films as "existential" Westerns, was of pretentiousness, and it in no way prepared me for the clean, uncluttered style of *Two-Lane Blacktop*, or its deliberate avoidance of any inflation of its subject. In fact, the film goes so far in eschewing the inflationary histrionic conventions of its genre, almost ritualistically turning aside from all conventional dramatic excitements whatsoever, that not a single race is shown to its completion, and, near the end, the main, cross-country race between the longhairs and the straight (with the loser's car to go to the winner) which gives the film its semblance of plot and destination is casually and unemphatically abandoned. Essentially, the film just starts, covers some ground, and stops. The final, inconclusive image of the longhair driver at the wheel simply grinds down slowly, freezes, and self-destructs, as if burned through by the bulb of the projector.

Of course, it is true that the longhairs and the hitchhiker are totally affectless and the straight a manic liar (about whom, characteristically, the film tells us nothing beyond the several identities he invents for himself), but the characters are seen so unjudgmentally as to make of these traits merely neutral description, as lacking in "significance" as the changes in the landscape. The longhairs' conversation is almost exclusively in the nature of "I got to check the valves," which is probably just as well given the occasional interjection of things like, "You can never go fast enough," or, "The thing is you got to keep moving"—yet these infrequent lapses have the effect not of overreaching but of being just perfunctory sops to critics, tossed in and immediately passed over. In the role of the longhair driver, folk-rock star James Taylor offers an utterly toneless reading that probably owes less to interpretation than to incompetence—a scene in which he and the girl sit on a fence and fumblingly attempt to speak to each other has the effect less of people striving inarticulately to communicate than of amateurs blowing their lines—yet Taylor has a face (he looks at times like a gaunt Christopher Plummer), and, for whatever it may say about the medium, he is able to hold the screen by virtue of this alone. As the straight, Warren Oates delivers the film's one really professional performance, and an excellent one, yet it would be false to suggest, as have some reviews, that his performance stands apart from the film as a virtuoso piece like Jack Nicholson's in *Easy Rider*; rather it is assimilated as completely as the others' amateurishness to the film's seamless style. This unifying style of the film is ultimately as much moral as aesthetic, and is the source of *Two-Lane Blacktop*'s cool and its coolness—by which I mean nothing McLuhanite or mediumistic, but have in mind rather the film's consistent refusal to explain itself or satisfy conventional expectations, and its rigorous unsentimentality. I'm aware that praising a film like *Two-Lane Blacktop* in COMMENTARY is probably an exercise in futility, especially given that the film has now, following its flop with the youth market, reportedly been withdrawn from circulation to be rereleased on bills geared to the motorcycle and hot-rod freaks, but, for what its's worth, I enjoyed it considerably more than I did such prestige-laden works as *The Go-Between* and *Sunday, Bloody Sunday*. Yet I wouldn't want to make exaggerated claims for it either. Essentially, the film just washes over one: one's experience of it that of a series of images and imperfectly grasped events speeding interestingly but uninflectedly past one's line of vision—like driving along in a car, to nowhere in particular.

IN ONE of the publicity articles fol-

WILLIAM S. PECHTER *writes on movies regularly in these pages.*

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lowing in the wake of the critical smash of *The Last Picture Show*, critic-turned-director Peter Bogdanovich was reported to have said that criticism was only something he did while really wanting to become a director. As someone wanting to become a critic, I read this with relief, since Bogdanovich's "criticism" always seemed to me an egregious mixture of director-struck fandom and semi-literacy (the critic-turned-director bit makes good reading only to the extent that one is unfamiliar with Bogdanovich's writing). Actually, most of Bogdanovich's output as a critic derives chiefly from his prowess with a tape recorder, and, more than anyone else, he is responsible for shaking my once firmly held belief that the interest of almost any interview exceeds that of almost any piece of film criticism; but then, never before Bogdanovich has an interviewer's sycophancy run so rampant (interviewer to director: "Well, how do you feel about *Gun Crazy*? Forget about superlatives," etc.).

Bogdanovich's gee-whiz critical style extends itself faithfully into his first film, *Targets*, in which Boris Karloff, playing an aging horror-film star, and Bogdanovich, playing a fledgling director, sit around watching a young Boris Karloff in scenes from Howard Hawks's 1931 *The Criminal Code* on television and saying things like, "He sure knows how to tell a story." Apart from such homages, *Targets* is about a crew-cut, all-American boy gone berserk as a sniper whose story is intercut with that of Karloff, making a film within the film and troubled about his movies' relation to actual violence, the two stories converging in a mass-slaying at a drive-in movie where Karloff's new film is being previewed—all of which sounds ingenious in paraphrase, especially insofar as paraphrase omits mention of its punch-telegraphing tendentiousness and technical gaucherie. The technical problems may stem in part from poverty; the film's interiors all seem to be lit by a few 25-watt bulbs, and the exterior scenes are markedly better. The signaling of points (about guns breeding violence, etc.) seems more a case of imaginative poverty, and found, I thought, an apposite response in a voice raised from the back of the 42nd Street fleapit where I saw the film to exclaim in mock surprise (after the gun-collecting, father-sirring young man shoots his first victim): "And he always seemed like such a *nice* boy!"

Bogdanovich the tape-recordist is more extensively represented in *Directed by John Ford*, his feature-length tribute to the veteran director. Now, as it happens, I share Bogdanovich's admiration for Ford (as it happens, I even share his admiration for the aforementioned *Gun Crazy*); if I didn't admire Ford as much as I do, I might object to Bogdanovich's film less. For though it is bad enough to see poor films gushed over with good ones, and to have the clips from Ford's films presented chronologically according to the periods in which they were set, as though they constituted a documentary record of American history, it seems to me that when one has to project clips from silent films at sound-film speed (presumably though not justifiably because of insuperable technical problems) and to reproduce clips from black-and-white films so crudely that virtually every value between black and white is eliminated (presumably though not justifiably because of the problems of printing black-and-white films in a color process) and reproduce even clips from color films so that the color is a gross travesty of the original (presumably though not justifiably because of the problems of reproducing films of one color process in a film shot in another)—when, in short, one presents a series of excerpts from Ford's films that does not even barely suggest the visual style of his work (which is the least one might expect of such a compilation), then I think the entire justification of such a "tribute" has been legitimately called into question. I suppose it could be argued that the Bogdanovich film might have some value in stimulating beginner's curiosity about Ford on the high-school assembly level, but even there it would run, I think, a very poor second to the recent television program, *The American West of John Ford*. So, then, when I read, in advance of my seeing *The Last Picture Show*, Andrew Sarris saying it is a film that elicits praise even from detractors of Bogdanovich's previous work, I wonder what is there in Bogdanovich's previous work to detract from.

Such, in any case, was the burden of prejudice under which I staggered to *The Last Picture Show*, and I detail it as qualification to the facts both of my liking the film more than I would have thought possible and to my thinking it something less than that "masterpiece" and "most impressive work by a young director since *Citizen Kane*" it's cracked up to be. *The Last Picture Show* is about the coming-of-age from adolescence to bleak manhood in a barren Texas town in the early 50's. The protagonist, Sonny, estranged from his own father and finding a father figure in the last-cowboy-style owner of the local café, poolroom, and movie theater, drifts from a passionless relation with one of the local girls into an affair with the wife of his high-school football coach, abandons her for the school beauty who only uses him for her own ends and drops him, and then, the café-owner having died, one friend in the army and off to Korea and another killed in an accident, finally attempts to leave town but returns instead to the coach's wife and a prospect of life in the town even less hopeful than that on which the film began. At almost every moment, one's impression of all this is of truthfulness and conviction, and yet one's ultimate complaint against it is the familiar one—Sonny remaining a blank, the brief appearance of his father only emphasizing the lack of information about his family life—of how little we are given to know. This is a problem in *The Last Picture Show* in a way it is not in *Two-Lane Blacktop*, because *The Last Picture Show* asks us to be moved by its characters and their drama as *Two-Lane Blacktop* doesn't. Nor is what we are given to know always plausible or convincing. The unlikely scene in which the high-school beauty has a tryst in a motel while an invited audience of fellow students waits in cars to certify the affair's consummation seems scarcely a cut above the coarse laugh-jerking of similar stuff in *Summer of '42*,

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and her motives in first inveigling Sonny into marrying her and then contriving to have her wealthy parents obtain an immediate annulment are at best opaque—presumably she uses Sonny as a way of proving herself capable of marrying after all other eligible prospects have been eliminated (though her triumph in this seems nonexistent) and of getting away from the town (though her mother has been willing and able to help her do this from the start). And Sonny's inability to leave town, though conveniently serving the mood of hopelessness, is in no way made compelling. These flaws may inhere in the novel by Larry McMurtry from which the film was adapted, and which I haven't read, but they remain flaws in the film nonetheless.

What is of more relevance to *The Last Picture Show* strictly as a film, however, is how little it is like the sort of film one might have expected Bogdanovich to make. Reviewers mentioning similarities to Huston or Stevens seem unaware that it is just such critically respectable, Establishment directors that Bogdanovich was rejecting as a critic in his advocacy of the popular cinema of Ford, Hawks, and Hitchcock. And yet Bogdanovich has made a "good old-fashioned picture" (the characterization is his) and a 50's film in only the most self-conscious and artificial sense: a film that opens at film festivals and plays at art houses to reviews which declare: "in the end, *The Last Picture Show* stands as both an elegy to the American dream and its epitaph." (I don't say this with any insinuations of reverse snobbery: some of my favorite films open at film festivals and play nowhere else.) *The Last Picture Show* may not be a "masterpiece" and "the most impressive work by a young director since *Citizen Kane*," but it is the kind of film that gets called such things in *Newsweek*: a work every moment of which has been painstakingly calculated for artistic effect. This is not to say it is anything like *Citizen Kane*, which is no less calculated but which flaunts its calculation, and much of the pleasure of which lies in one's being aware of its stylistic flamboyance in a way that is clearly invited. Rather, *The Last Picture Show is* like the films of Stevens and Huston—or at least such films of theirs as *A Place in the Sun* and *The Asphalt Jungle*—in the way one's apprehension of the meaning of everything has been so carefully planned for. This doesn't bother one in the Huston film (it does more in the Stevens) since *The Asphalt Jungle* is no more than brilliant melodrama whose enjoyment is increased by one's consciousness of the mastery of its manipulation of conventions and stereotypes; but *The Last Picture Show* strives to evoke emotions more profound, and here its calculation works against it. Sam, the cowboy, reminisces about how things were, then dies, and one thinks to oneself, "A way of life has vanished." Sonny and his friend watch John Wayne lead a cattle drive in Hawks's *Red River* the night before the friend is to leave for Korea and the movie theater to be permanently shut down, and one thinks, "A stark contrast between Western myth and reality." Soon after, Sonny's other friend, a mute, retarded boy, is run over in the early morning by a truck transporting cattle, and one thinks, "An ironic counterpoint between the old West and the new," though at this point I also began thinking that there was perhaps an author's hand meddling a bit too gratuitously in Sonny's fate. Everything is so artfully drab, that the artfulness throws the drabness into question. Even the decision to photograph in black-and-white, however justifiable aesthetically (and Robert Surtees's photography is very fine and extremely effective), can't wholly escape the sense of being, now that all major American films (and even films as down-beat as *Wanda*) have for years been in color, something of an affectation. Once, it is true, the convention of black-and-white photography was so firmly established as to make it more "realistic" than color (especially when color processes were less good), but that time has passed, probably irrevocably. And one can't help feeling that the drab little Texas town might be just a bit less felicitously drab in color.

Yet, having said this, I do want to reiterate that *The Last Picture Show* is a good movie; a considerably better one, I think, than, say, *Five Easy Pieces*, to recall last year's instant classic. If Harold Clurman's comparison of it with the work of Sherwood Anderson aptly suggests the film's limitations, it suggests also how creditable is its achievement. Being familiar with Bogdanovich's previous work, I'm inclined to regard *The Last Picture Show* as an achievement of collaborators; the achievement of its director, to be sure, but also of a highly skilled and well-established photographer, of a novelist who also co-authored the screenplay, and a cast of accomplished actors; anyone, for instance, suggesting that veteran character actor Ben Johnson comes into his own here for the first time under Bogdanovich's direction simply cannot know his work in several John Ford films, *Shane*, *One-Eyed Jacks*, etc., as I'm sure Bogdanovich would be among the first to agree. As a one-time Bogdanovich-detractor, I'm willing to entertain the possibility that *The Last Picture Show* represents the director's maturity as an artist, and his leaving of the mediocrity of his previous work far behind—but only if the Bogdanovich-boosters entertain the possibility that *The Last Picture Show* indicates how little in the way of imagination and critical intelligence might, in favorable circumstances, be needed to direct a good movie.

The Last Picture Show is *Citizen Kane* next to *Desperate Characters*, which is like a solemn, middle-aged, upper-middle-class version of *Little Murders*. New York's upper-middle class seems to have been brushing up on its (ersatz) Antonioni to judge from the way its members stand or sit around staring vacantly away from each other into space, while saying things like (wife to husband, approximately): "I saw Tanya today"; (husband to wife, expressionlessly): "I hate Tanya." Some desperate critics have been saying this is the film in which Shirley MacLaine, sleepwalking among somnambulists, gives the performance of her career. Before you believe it, see *Some Came Running* on television.

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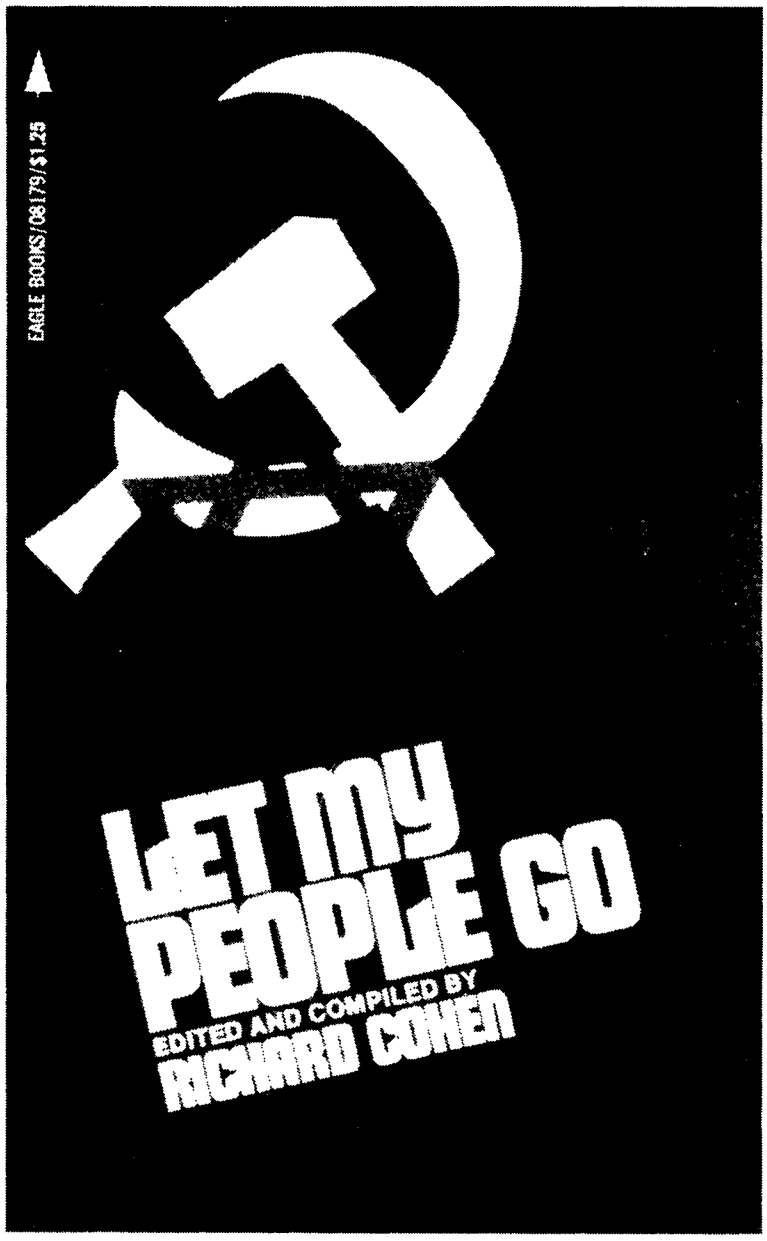
RICHARD COHEN, associate executive director of the American Jewish Congress, served as chief press officer of the World Conference of Jewish Communities on Soviet Jewry in Brussels, February, 1971.



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Books in Review

Ultimate Politics

KENNEDY JUSTICE. By VICTOR S. NAVASKY. *Atheneum. 508 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by JAMES Q. WILSON

MOST studies of political leadership, and virtually all studies of Presidential leadership, suffer from the egocentric fallacy—namely, the assumption that governance consists chiefly, if not entirely, of the confrontation between a personality and an issue which is resolved in a way that expresses some combination of the style of the former and the merits of the latter. Rarely, especially in those studies which acquire a large popular audience, is the personality placed in the context of the realities of an ongoing institution, the issue stated in ways that highlight its organizational as well as ideological implications, and the decision described so as to reveal both the elements of necessity and of choice, of drift and of mastery.

The memoirs of some of our more skillful political executives often give a better sense of the actual context of decision-making than any study by an outsider, which is perhaps one reason they are so rarely read and so frequently remaindered. The details, complexities, and subtleties of even ordinary decisions provide little opportunity for the pen to capture the bold phrase or the revealing moment.

Victor Navasky's study of Robert F. Kennedy as Attorney General is as close as we have come thus far to a serious examination of the manner of governance of a member of that family whose style and legends have tended to obscure the question of whether or not any of them were very good at their jobs. Navasky attempts to place RFK in the context of a large institution and tries to explain and evaluate his behavior with respect, not so much to a few dramatic "crises," as to the ongoing problems of managing a bureaucracy in a federal system faced with the challenges of a militant civil-rights movement, the continued menace of organized crime, the extraordinary opportunity to appoint a large number of federal judges, and the recurring questions of what issues to litigate and to what end. How the Justice Department behaved in these and other matters is, in Navasky's view, to be explained by the interactions that occurred among the operating codes and political perceptions of the permanent bureaucracy (particularly the FBI), of the "Ivy League gentlemen" who constituted the command cadres of the department, and of Robert Kennedy himself.

IN THE rendering of accounts, Kennedy and his chief lieutenants receive high marks for the ransoming of the Cuban refugee brigade captured after the Bay of Pigs invasion and for helping persuade the Supreme Court to accept the one-man, one-vote principle in the reapportionment cases; they receive poor marks for their handling of James Meredith's effort to enter the University of Mississippi, their failure to protect civil-rights workers in the South, their appointment of certain Southerners to federal district judgeships, the "Get-Hoffa" campaign, and (above all) their management of the FBI; they get mixed marks for their drive against crime (the drive itself is lauded, the use of wiretaps and the failure to regulate the use of electronic surveillance is criticized). Navasky concludes with no simple, summary judgment, but if the marks he awards can be added up, the account taken as a whole is more critical than complimentary, especially since Navasky judges most severely the handling of that subject—civil rights—which obviously is of greatest importance to him.

The analysis is subtle and intelligent, though not always complete (clearly, some informants talked more freely to Navasky than others, and in general those who talked the most tend to appear in the most favorable light); the evaluation, however, is based on a standard that for the most part is implicit rather than explicit.

If made explicit, I believe the standard would be this: politics is not the art of the possible, but the art of the desirable. To Navasky, political leadership is, or should be, the mobilization of maximum resources for the pursuit of ultimate objectives. Navasky approves every time Kennedy's Justice Department appears to have done this—when in a matter of days it coordinated every relevant element of the federal government and the private sector to achieve the ransoming of the Bay of Pigs prisoners, or when it allegedly maneuvered Solicitor General Archibald Cox into supporting by stages the one-man, one-vote standard in the reapportionment cases. Navasky disapproves when Kennedy Justice failed to do this—when it did not give all-out protection to civil-rights workers in the South, did not use maximum force to place James Meredith into Ole Miss, and did not take complete control of the FBI to subordinate its operations in every way to the will of the Attorney General. Kennedy and his group were at their best, Navasky claims, when they operated as guerrillas on the bureaucratic landscape, ignoring forms and legalisms to achieve important objectives; they were at their worst when they failed to defeat "the system" or yielded to the values of the "Establishment."

THERE is one conspicuous exception to this judgment—the "Get-Hoffa Squad." Navasky leaves little doubt that Kennedy Justice launched an all-out effort to put Jimmy Hoffa in jail on any charge and by any legal means whatsoever. Though Navasky asserts there was no abuse of the law (such as by illegal elec-

JAMES Q. WILSON, *professor of government at Harvard, is the author of, among other books,* Varieties of Police Behavior.

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tronic surveillance), he claims that there was an abuse of discretion—RFK in this case picked a person he thought he should get rather than a crime he thought should be prosecuted. All the Kennedy resources were mobilized: RFK did not hesitate, while Attorney General, to help plant an article in *Life* magazine critical of a man then under indictment by the agency RFK headed; and Stephen Smith, financial manager of the Kennedy family, did not hesitate to supply Walter Sheridan, former head of the Get-Hoffa Squad, with three thousand dollars to give to an informant whose testimony had helped convict a Hoffa lawyer. Navasky is of two minds about this issue. On the one hand, he writes that the "great achievement of the Kennedys, with their charismatic authority system, is that they were in many respects able to subvert the bureaucratic authority system that confronted them." On the other hand, the "personalism and moralism" that was a necessary part of the "charismatic subversion" of administrative regularity "transmitted to succeeding Justice Departments the precedent for a Get-Dissenters Squad." Navasky likes the idea of a Kennedy who can defeat "the system" but worries about the precedents created for the non-Kennedys who may come later. John Mitchell is not mentioned, but the implication is clear.

This is the central issue of the book, one Navasky recognizes but does not squarely confront. Navasky likes Kennedy-style "ultimate politics" and anti-bureaucratic guerrilla warfare directed toward the right ends, but who will govern the infiltrated land when the guerrillas have departed, and to what ends will the new campaigns then be directed? "Here is not the place to argue the virtues of spontaneous action versus the dangers of procedural irregularity, the virtues of federal self-restraint versus the dangers of unprotected individual rights, the virtues of effective results versus the dangers of defective procedures."

But why not argue them here? More importantly, since they *are* argued by Navasky implicitly, why not argue them explicitly? The civil-rights episodes, together with the Hoffa incident, are the crucial cases. The account of RFK's relations with Governor Ross Barnett of Mississippi is illustrative both of the political problem and of the Navasky evaluative technique. In contrapuntal style, he alternates verbatim extracts of telephone exchanges between Kennedy and Barnett over the Meredith case with passages of his own prose that allege that Kennedy was "captured" by state and local "bureaucracies," surrounded by "Ivy League gentlemen" who were prepared to "stand idly by when confronted by murder," and that he became "bogged down" in a "philosophy of inaction" and "an ideology of impotence," and was ready to "sacrifice civil rights to civil tranquillity." Perhaps. Surely the civil-rights activists expected more protection from Justice than they got; possibly deploying the army instead of a small force of federal marshalls might have secured Meredith's entry into Ole Miss with less difficulty; conceivably the Justice Department could have been actively involved in many more racial confrontations (there were twenty-three in sixteen states in one week of June 1963 alone). But in no case does Navasky argue the matter seriously: Barnett's vacillations and deceptions are counterposed to assertions about the gullibility of the "Ivy League mentality," but no detailed analysis of even the Ole Miss incident, to say nothing of the many other cases in which Justice was or should have been involved, is offered.

Nor is the political context adequately discussed. John F. Kennedy was not a widely popular President until after his murder; he had a narrow Congressional majority; in 1962 and 1963, it was no better than an even-money bet that he would win again in 1964. In the South, Navasky's view that Kennedy Justice would go to almost any lengths to avoid a confrontation and that it had been "captured" by state and local bureaucracies will come as a surprise to the majority of Southerners who thought they were in a last-ditch fight with a Kennedy administration they hated and feared. It is not impossible to reconcile the perceptions of the South with the arguments of Navasky, but to do so requires a more careful and detailed analysis of what the administration both said and did on civil rights than is provided in this book. The crucial problem may be that the "charismatic style" not only overrides bureaucratic regularity, it creates popular expectations. To have and maintain such a style leads people—civil-rights activists as well as Southern conservatives—to believe, in hope or in fear, that great changes are impending and a new era dawning. Those who welcome what the style promises will be disappointed, even outraged, when in any particular case the action taken is routinely political rather than dramatically bold; those who fear it will believe that they are the objects of a hostile conspiracy even when little is in fact happening.

The point is best made in the book by Harold Fleming of the Potomac Institute, whose reflections on the civil-rights struggle are reported by Navasky:

> Project yourself back to '61 or '62. There was a totally unjustified euphoria. The climate of expectation was created not by Kennedys with an intention to deceive, but by the ethos of the moment. . . . We were all unsophisticated about power. We thought it was there to be used. This was exciting. We didn't know about the inhibitions of power. . . . Everybody overestimated the capacity of the Administration to intervene in an unlimited way. And everybody underestimated the prospective need for intervention. The sense of betrayal which came later was the inevitable hangover from the binge.

Navasky is at his best when he patiently unravels complex factual issues—the wiretapping and bugging of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (RFK authorized the former but not the latter) and the decisions to prosecute former Harvard Law School Dean James Landis for tax evasion and a former New York judge for bribery. What one learns from these accounts is that, in addition to the singleminded, relentless RFK who sent Ralph Ginzburg to jail for circulating obscenity or Jimmy Hoffa for corrupting jurors, there was the RFK who allowed,

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when the moral issue seemed less clearcut or the right act less unambiguous, the Justice Department to drift and the control of events to slip from his hands. In these cases, as well as in civil rights, the legend of Kennedy "vigor" (or, to their enemies, "ruthlessness") suffers significantly when viewed in light of the facts. We gain in exchange a better understanding of how an important government agency behaves in times of crisis.

Jewish Identity

ISRAELIS AND JEWS: THE CONTINUITY OF AN IDENTITY. By SIMON N. HERMAN. *Random House. 331 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by MARSHALL SKLARE

ISRAELI sociology and social psychology have constantly sought to emphasize the universal rather than the particular. This inclination has prevailed even when the subject under investigation is an institution found only in Israeli society. Thus, for example, research on the kibbutz has focused on what that institution can teach us about problems which *all* societies face: the dilemmas of child-rearing, the traumas of adolescence, and the role conflicts of women. The Israeli researcher generally treats as incidental the fact that kibbutzniks are Jews who live in a Jewish society.

The reason for this stress on the universal is not hard to locate. Israeli sociologists and social psychologists have prized their membership in the international community of scholars, and they have regarded that membership as contingent upon avoiding research which might stamp them as parochial. Their reference group, to use the terminology of the trade, has been international rather than national. As a consequence, Israel's social scientists have frequently neglected problems of essential importance to the society of which they are a part.

There are exceptions to the general rule. The most notable is Simon Herman, a social psychologist who holds an appointment in the Hebrew University's Department of Psychology as well as in its Institute of Contemporary Jewry. In contrast to his colleagues, Herman has continually occupied himself with issues that are specific to Israel. As a long-time disciple of the late Kurt Lewin, he has taken as his starting point Lewin's general analytical framework as well as the specific orientation to Jewish identity which Lewin came to develop during the latter half of his career.

Israelis and Jews adds to the reputation which Herman established for himself by earlier published works on Israeli responses to the Eichmann trial, and on attitude changes among American-Jewish students who spent a year in Israel. *Israelis and Jews* is in fact the logical culmination of Herman's long-term concern with a crucial problem which is special to Israeli society—the problem of Jewishness. *Israelis and Jews*, however, is more than a tentative first step in this underresearched field; it constitutes a definitive study of the problem, and one hopes that it will also signal a new direction for Israeli social science as a whole.

THE CORE of *Israelis and Jews* is an attitude survey administered in 1964-5 to 3,679 junior-year students enrolled in 117 Israeli high schools. As large as the sample was it was not entirely representative, since high-school attendance has been far from universal in Israel. Thus, the sample overrepresented youth of Ashkenazic, as opposed to Oriental, origin; it was biased in the direction of the middle and upper classes; and it neglected extremist sectors of the population—it did not, for example, include students enrolled in ultra-Orthodox *yeshivot*. Nevertheless, Herman's coverage was comprehensive enough to provide a clear understanding of the Jewish identity problem of young Israelis. The value of his findings is further enhanced by sub-studies which he initiated in connection with his main investigation: these included a survey of parents as well as depth-interviews with a small group of the original youth-sample.

The major impression one takes away from Herman's meticulous and frequently original probing of the identity problem is that despite the book's subtitle ("The Continuity of an Identity"), a serious problem of discontinuity between Israeli and Jewish identity exists among a significant minority of his youthful subjects. Furthermore, the clear implication of Herman's findings is that this minority is likely to grow larger in numbers and influence.

Almost every page of *Israelis and Jews* offers evidence of a rejection of Jewishness. In response to the question, "Does the fact that you are Jewish play an important part in your life?" some 25 per cent responded that it is of little importance and 7 per cent said that it plays no part in their life. In response to the question, "If you were to be born again would you wish to be born a Jew?" some 28 per cent responded that they were indifferent and 2 per cent said they would prefer not to be born Jewish. When presented with the possibility of living as a Jew outside of Israel ("If you were to live abroad would you wish to be born a Jew?") only 54 per cent responded positively, 25 per cent said they were indifferent, and 21 per cent stated that they would prefer not to be born Jewish. On the other hand, in response to the question, "If you were to be born again would you wish to be born an Israeli?" some 81 per cent answered in the affirmative, 17 per cent said it made no difference, and 2 per cent responded in the negative. Thus there was considerably greater preference shown for an "Israeli" over a "Jewish" identity, and the attractiveness of being Jewish was even further reduced if it entailed living in the Diaspora.

The parents interviewed in the subsidiary study, who as a rule were more deeply rooted in a Jewish past, proved to be free of many of the conflicts of their children. Thus only 8 per cent of the parents (in contrast to 25 per cent of the youth) felt that Jewishness was of little importance in their life,

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and only 1 per cent of the parents (in contrast to 7 per cent of the children) felt that being Jewish played no part at all in their life. And whereas only 23 per cent of the high-school students felt that Jewishness played an important part in their life, some 62 per cent of their parents stated that it did.

Intermarriage is the soft underbelly of Israeli Jewishness, just as it is of Jewishness in America, though in Israel the question is necessarily more of theoretical than of practical significance. Asked the question, "What is your opinion of a Jew in Israel who marries a non-Jew?" only 40 per cent of the students said that they were opposed, 21 per cent were opposed but understanding, and a full 37 per cent said that intermarriage was a private affair and should not be condemned. Some 2 per cent had a positive bias in favor of intermarriage. Furthermore, some 27 per cent said that they themselves would be prepared to intermarry and that they would do so without requiring that their partner convert to Judaism. And while 50 per cent were opposed to a Jew in Israel who converts to another religion, 32 per cent said that they could not bring themselves to oppose conversion—the individual in their view should be free to make the religious choice best suited to his needs and temperament.

As Herman sees it, the problem of Jewish identity is found in all class groups in Israel; the lower class displays as much discontinuity as the middle class. Nor is there a clear-cut variation in the amount of discontinuity found among those of different communal origins (Ashkenazim vs. Sephardim). Furthermore, discontinuity is not associated with generation, for it is found in first-generation as well as fifth-generation Israeli families.

The main strategic variable which determines the severity of the identity problem appears to be religion. Herman demonstrates that the identity problem is epidemic among *lo-dati'im* (non-religious) who comprise the largest group (42 per cent) in his sample;

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it is attenuated among *m'sorati'im* (traditionalists, or those who have a positive orientation to Jewish tradition combined with varying degrees of selectivity in regard to observance), who comprise 32 per cent of the sample. As for *dati'im* (religious), who comprise 25 per cent of the sample, they are rarely found to suffer from a discontinuity between their Israeli and their Jewish identity. As Herman puts it:

> Significant differences consistently appear on Jewish-identity items between religious, traditionalist, and non-religious students. The Jewish identity of the religious student is much stronger than that of the traditionalist and non-religious student; the Jewish identity of the traditionalist is stronger than that of the non-religious student. On all questions relating to Jewishness, the Jewish people, or Jews abroad, the sequence is: I, religious; II, non-religious. Not only do the religious students feel more Jewish and value their Jewishness more under all circumstances, but they feel closer to, and have a greater sense of identification with, Jews everywhere.

Furthermore, were it not for the traditionalists and the religious, the degree of discontinuity among Israeli youth would be even more serious than it is. As Herman observes about the non-religious:

> Only a bare majority of the non-religious would wish to be reborn Jews, and they are reduced to a minority when the question relates to the wish to be reborn Jews if they had to live abroad. Thus there are serious limits to the value these students attach to their being Jewish.

It is a tribute to Herman's rigorous integrity as a scholar that he presents his data as unblinkingly as he does. As a deeply committed Zionist of long standing, Herman cannot be expected to be happy with the fact of discontinuity in the first place, or with the conclusion that discontinuity is lessened by religion in the second place. Classical Zionism posed for itself the task of solving at one and the same time the physical and the psychological problem of Jewish life in the Diaspora, and Herman clearly would like to believe that Zionist theory has culminated in Zionist reality. But he does not close his eyes to the fact that the establishment of the State of Israel, though solving many problems, also brought with it several unforeseen consequences, notable among them the split between Israeli and Jewish identity which he so relentlessly documents.

To be sure, Herman is reluctant to draw the conclusion that the sundering of identities which he has discovered may itself be seen as the logical result of the splitting off of ethnicity from religion which occurred with the rise of the Zionist movement. But as someone who has never been identified with the religious forces in Israeli society, he no doubt appreciates the irony of his final recommendations for action. For Herman now believes that an Israeli nationalism separated from religion constitutes a threat to the unity of the Jewish people. Therefore he looks to the religious forces in the Jewish community to restore the damage wrought by the non-religious with their overemphasis on national values. True, he is not very specific as to what is to be done—he speaks of the need to "open up paths to an intensified Jewishness" and "to develop diversified expressions of Jewish living." But in any case he looks to the *dati'im,* the religious, to take the leadership, and seeks to assure his non-religious colleagues that they have nothing to fear from such leadership. For a secularist these are large concessions to make.

To the student of American-Jewish life *Israelis and Jews* not only represents a fascinating piece of research but also can provide a perverse kind of satisfaction. The crisis of Jewish identity, it seems, is not unique to the Diaspora, and Israel, notwithstanding its heroic achievements in every field, has by no means solved this persistent problem of the Jews. And there is some comfort, too, to be drawn from the knowledge that however strong is the potential for rift between these two great Jewries, Israel and the Diaspora continue to retain one great link: they have a Jewish-identity problem in common.

Dissent in the USSR

THE MEDVEDEV PAPERS. By ZHORES A. MEDVEDEV. Translated by VERA RICH. *St. Martins. 470 pp. $11.95.*

A QUESTION OF MADNESS. By ZHORES A. MEDVEDEV and ROY A. MEDVEDEV. Translated by ELLEN DE KADT. *Knopf. 224 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by ANTHONY ASTRACHAN

THE Medvedev brothers were born in 1925, the twin sons of a philosophy professor, a Communist party member who died in one of Stalin's prison camps. Zhores is a biologist, a specialist in the genetics of aging. Roy is a historian. Marxists both, they are a long way from the radical critics of the Soviet regime described most often in articles in the Western press about Moscow dissidents. But they are unusual among Soviet Marxists in that they believe in the right of dissent.

Zhores first exercised that right by attacking Trofim Lysenko's domination of Soviet biology—a domination that had succeeded in bringing Soviet agricultural progress to a halt for almost thirty years, and whose crippling effects on Soviet science are still felt, particularly in the field of molecular biology. Zhores's book about the struggle against Lysenko was approved for publication by a special committee of Soviet scientists, but the project was dropped after the book was published in this country by Columbia University Press in 1969. In fact, none of the Medvedev books has ever been published in the Soviet Union; they circulate only in *samizdat*—"self-published," typewritten copies.

For Zhores, the general case was that Lysenko's homemade genetics and political rule of science would

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not have been possible if the Soviet Union had allowed free scientific contacts with the outside world. The particular case was that his own role in the struggle against Lysenko and the book he wrote about it became factors in his being repeatedly denied trips abroad that would, as he argues, have made him a better biologist, with consequent benefits to Soviet science. The combination of the general and the particular led him to study the whole problem of international scientific cooperation. The result was the ironically titled essay, "Fruitful Meetings Between Scientists of the World," which makes up more than half of *The Medvedev Papers*.

In "Fruitful Meetings," Medvedev tells how in the early 60's he was prevented from accepting invitations to the fifth, sixth, and seventh international gerontological conferences. Then he was invited to spend a year in a gerontological laboratory at the National Institutes of Health near Washington, D.C. The Soviet authorities indicated that they might let him go if he agreed to serve as a KGB spy. Zhores was willing to report on any American attempts to seduce Soviet scientists, but he dropped his request for a passport when he discovered that the KGB was really interested in his friends at home—particularly Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's wife, a scientist whom Medvedev had backed for a post at his research institute. Zhores was later invited to deliver the annual Ciba Foundation lecture on aging in England in 1966. Once more he was denied permission to go abroad, and on the day he was to have given the lecture, he was digging potatoes as part of his laboratory's annual harvest task.

FROM these particulars, Medvedev goes on to discuss what international cooperation can do for science and what Soviet noncooperation does to damage Soviet science. On the first count, his belief that international contacts are not luxuries or rewards for deserving public servants, but essentials of true scientific progress, is apparent on every page. Unfortunately, he does not make a truly eloquent or persuasive argument for this view, which scientists from many countries share. On the second count, Medvedev draws a devastating sketch of needless backwardness and inept management in Soviet science. Among the data he cites is the estimate that 85 per cent of Soviet inventions in 1961 duplicated work already done in the Soviet Union or abroad, because the inventors were ignorant of their colleagues' work. Similarly, untold funds were wasted when the Soviets insisted on building a more elaborate version of an American laboratory that was "obsolescent even before it [was] completed," instead of sending a dozen scientists to work in the original lab while building something really new themselves. On the failure to close the gap between Soviet and Western biochemistry despite advances after the fall of Lysenko, Medvedev remarks: "In the principal direction of advance of these years, the deciphering of the genetic code, the determination of the quaternary and tertiary structure of proteins, and in the study of the sequence of amino acids in proteins and nucleotides in nucleic acids, that is, in work requiring first-class equipment, we were even further behind our American colleagues. Not one of the 64 codons of the genetic code was experimentally deciphered in the USSR."

IN THE second part of *The Medvedev Papers*, also ironically titled —"Secrecy of Correspondence Is Guaranteed by Law"—Zhores sketches the Kafkaesque world of Soviet postal censorship. The spirit of scientific inquiry forced him to note that strange things were happening to his personal correspondence with foreign scientists and to some of the scientific journals he was supposed to receive from abroad. He observed first of all that postal censors are classified by languages they can read, not by subject matter; that each has a number; and that this number is stamped on mail with one sign for "this is permitted" (a double angle) and another for "this is prohibited" (a hexagon). Zhores discovered that while some mail may have the "prohibited" sign and still reach secret files or privileged individuals, much mail never reaches its addressee and is presumably destroyed.

Medvedev's description of his struggle to make the censors and the postal authorities live up to Soviet law would be humorous—some of the authorities seemed not to know of the censors' function—if it were not so macabre. He succeeded in finding the telephone number of the censor who read most of his mail and called him to complain of items being "lost." "With a faint note of respect," Zhores writes, "he categorically denied any possibility of anything being lost in my mail. 'Your name, Comrade Medvedev, is on our *checklist*.' (He gave this word a special emphasis.) 'Everything which comes for you is sorted at once and sent on to its destination. No losses are possible, we can answer for that.' " Zhores adds, "To what destination it is sent, he did not say."

The humor and modesty of such recountings, and the testimony of those who know him, suggest that Zhores Medvedev is an urbane spirit as well as a patient and persistent scientist. Unfortunately, *The Medvedev Papers* is written in a stuffy style, like an oil slick through which the dolphins of anecdote must continually break. This is partly the fault of an unnecessarily turgid translation by Vera Rich, but Medvedev is probably to blame, too. Serious discussion of matters of state and science can make the most urbane citizen sound stuffy in the Soviet Union.

A Question of Madness is both easier to read and more compelling. It is the story of Zhores's forcible confinement in a psychiatric hospital because of the authorities' interest in his books on Lysenko and scientific cooperation and in his friendship with Solzhenitsyn. It was written as a journal hurrying to keep pace with events, so it has the force of a documentary novel, and it is well-translated by Ellen de Kadt. In alternate, chronological chapters, Zhores tells what happened to him in the hospital and Roy tells the story of efforts to get him out, which succeeded when some of the biggest names in

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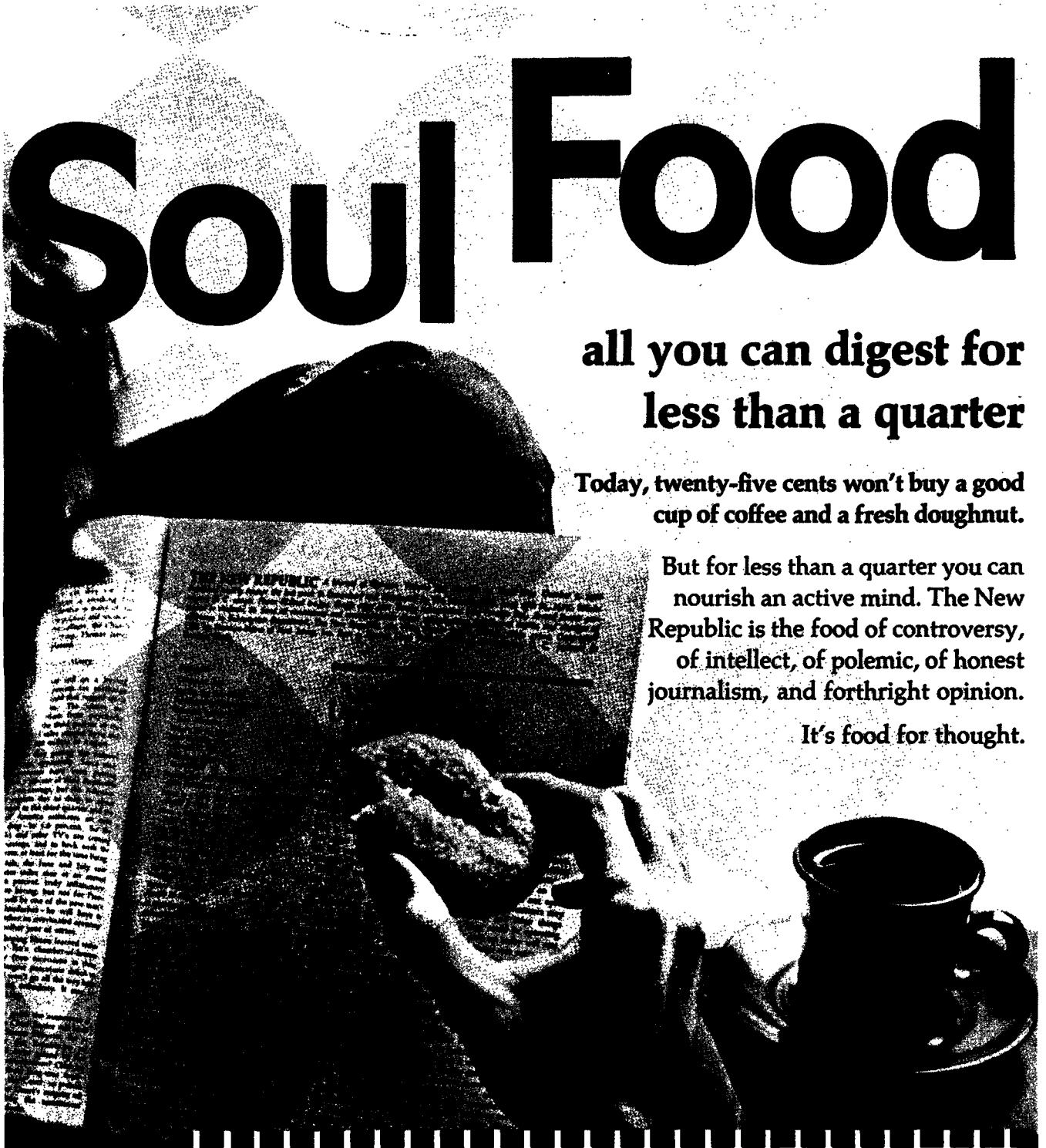

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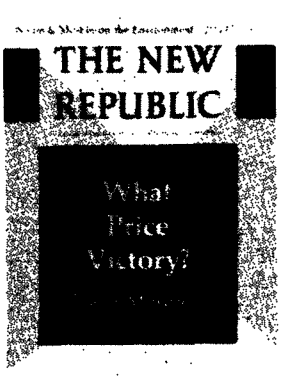

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Soviet science testified to his sanity.

Local party and secret-police officials apparently moved against Zhores as part of a campaign against ideologically "unreliable" scientists in Obninsk, a city of many scientific establishments. Some of the higher authorities in Moscow backed the Obninsk authorities, but others—perhaps including the headquarters of the KGB—did not. This may explain Medvedev's ultimate release, for when the central authorities are of a single mind and are determined to put political offenders into psychiatric facilities, they do so. Testimony from such dissident-inmates as Pyotr Grigorenko and Vladimir Bukovsky has shown the perversions of science that are enacted in order to accomplish this aim, and *A Question of Madness* deals with these aspects too in a relatively cool final analysis.

SOVIET psychiatric incompetence was demonstrated in the first place when a local doctor claimed he was justified in trying to hospitalize Zhores after a twenty-minute conversation, ostensibly about his son, in the office of the mayor of Obninsk. Incompetence was demonstrated continuously, right up to the point when G. Morozov, a Moscow expert, told some of the best-known Soviet scientists that Zhores was a schizophrenic because he wrote books about political subjects although he was a biologist by profession. The book mentions this incident but omits the reply of academicians Pyotr Kapitsa and Vladimir Engelgardt, who suggested that Morozov be awarded a Lenin prize for discovering something new in psychopathology—the "Leonardo da Vinci" syndrome. Zhores notes later that two famous individuals "suffered" much more than he did from this syndrome. It would take a Soviet reader three seconds to realize he is describing Stalin and Khrushchev.

A. V. Snezhnevsky, chief psychiatrist of the USSR Ministry of Health, and secretary of the Academy of Medical Sciences, was very upset by the public protests of Medvedev's friends, which were reported by Western correspondents in Moscow and broadcast back to millions of Soviet listeners by the BBC, the Voice of America, and Radio Liberty. He thought the protests might persuade thousands of mentally-ill citizens not to go to Soviet psychiatrists. He also warned Andrei Sakharov, the nuclear physicist and human-rights champion, about "obsessive reformist delusions." "I found it comic," Roy Medvedev quotes Sakharov as saying, "but of course I know it's not very funny for people who land up in a mental hospital after being diagnosed like that."

The book reports that Snezhnevsky feared the Medvedev case would become the occasion for recriminations against Soviet psychiatry at the world psychiatric congress in Mexico City in December 1971. In the event, he need have had no worries; the Congress did nothing. But *A Question of Madness* apparently reinforced those fears: in October, *Izvestia* published a long article asserting that Soviet psychiatry was esteemed everywhere and denying that mentally healthy people were detained in psychiatric hospitals because of their dissident activities. Such denials are very rare, since the accusations they deny have never been made in official media.

The most magnificent words in the book come from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who broke his usual silence on individual cases to write an open letter. He describes Zhores as "a man with a brilliant, subtle and precise mind and a warm heart. . . . Because of the very diversity of his talents, he is charged with being abnormal, a 'split personality.' His very sensitivity to injustice, to stupidity, is presented as a 'morbid deviation,' 'poor adaptation to the social environment.' Apparently, to harbor thoughts other than those which are *prescribed* means that you are abnormal. . . ." In his letter Solzhenitsyn sums up everything that has to be said, finally, about the Soviet manner of dealing with dissidence:

> It has become fashionable, this way of settling accounts, with no pretense at seeking out guilt, when it is too shameful to state the real reason. . . . It is time to understand that the imprisonment of sane persons in madhouses because they have minds of their own is *spiritual murder*, a variation on the *gas chambers* and even more cruel. . . . Like the gas chambers, these crimes will *never* be forgotten, and those involved will be condemned for all time, during their life and after their death, without benefit of moratorium.

Health Care

AMERICAN MEDICINE AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST. By ROSEMARY STEVENS. *Yale University Press. 572 pp. $18.50.*

Reviewed by WALTER GOODMAN

AMONG the popular subjects of the past several publishing seasons, up there with the Vietnam crisis, the black crisis, the youth crisis, and the crisis of sexual technology, has been the American health-care crisis. I have read my share of books and articles in the category and have come away informed, concerned, puzzled, and annoyed at doctors, politicians, bureaucrats, and the writers of the books and articles. The last-named tended to be more or less on my side—that is, on the side of the medical consumer rather than of the supplier—yet they were a punishment to read. Written for the most part in a fit of bad temper, real or worked up for the occasion, they managed to be provoking without being provocative. Though clogged with statistics and sizzling with case histories, they assumed too much and explained too little; their favored perspective was high dudgeon; and they shared an unseemly satisfaction in predicting catastrophe if something-or-other or everything were not done at once. The prescriptions, however, brought to mind those wide-spectrum antibiotics (which several of the writers condemned) which may relieve one's current ailments but can induce troublesome side effects.

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American Medicine and the Public Interest. Rosemary Stevens, an associate professor of public health at Yale, sets out with the observation that our medical system is, yes, in "a state of crisis"—so far no different from what all the others have been telling us; but she has the courtesy to move on to elucidate the nature of the crisis. It should not, she notes, be interpreted "as one of imminent collapse of health services—the United States is well-stocked with personnel and facilities and can afford to spend even more on providing them." We are, rather, "at a critical stage of health-care development. Perhaps a more appropriate word is maelstrom." Perhaps not. In any case, since she doesn't suffer from the journalist's compulsion to show that she is more outraged than everybody else, she was able to go about her job in so reasoned a way that I ended up not only prepared to accept her diagnosis, swallow her medicine, and forgive her sentence structure, but to nominate her for the post of Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Professor Stevens's book appears at a propitious time. The Congress is even now moving, without undue haste, to the passage of some sort of national health-insurance measure. Among the great issues to be resolved are: how credit will be apportioned between President Nixon and Chairman Wilbur Mills of the House Ways and Means Committee; whether Senator Edward Kennedy will improve his standing in the polls; and which plan will do the most for the profits of doctors, drug makers, insurance companies, and proprietors of hospitals and nursing homes. After these matters have been ironed out there will remain the question of how to provide for people's health needs in an efficient way, to make full use of now uncoordinated medical specialties. To replace the present "disorganized system of private practitioners for the comparatively affluent, a disorganized clinic system for the poor, and a mixture for those who fall between," Professor Stevens envisions something resembling clusters of interrelated neighborhood clinics, offering all manner of specialties, from dental care to mental care—but she cautions that "national health insurance, like Medicare and Medicaid, could serve to increase further both the demand for services, and their costs, in an inflationary spiral, rather than necessarily affect the operation of the health-care system."

THE nation's medical problems do not arise out of any failure of research or skills. Most of us have good personal reasons to count as blessings the techniques, instruments, and drugs brought into play since World War II. Unfortunately, the blessings are inequitably distributed and their cost is proving exceedingly burdensome. These failings are plain to see.

In addition to all the other ills that slum families are heir to, they must get along with something less than first-rate health care. Physicians, like the rest of us, prefer not to live or work in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and their professional organization has shown itself willing to forgo its licensed prerogatives when it comes to poor people, much as the taxi-driver profession has done. To the slum dweller, the endless argument over the fate of the beloved family doctor must seem remote, since his family doctor is likely to be whoever is on duty in the emergency room of some hospital, an environment not known for developing trust or lifting a patient's spirits. The care he obtains in time of illness or injury may not be bad—most emergency rooms are better equipped than an ordinary doctor's office—but something more, something different, is needed to keep him well between times, to reduce infant mortality in his neighborhood, to combat tuberculosis and other diseases which can now be cured but which continue to trouble our inner cities. To be sure, the health of poor people is not exclusively a medical matter; given the best will, physicians cannot cure poverty and all that goes with it. But the suffering of today must be eased as we await the millennium, and the medical profession has not shown itself eager to take on even that job.

There are other places besides slums where physicians do not care to reside—and so we find that rural areas, too, must do without doctors. Yet if by some magic more physicians were induced to leave urban discontent behind and settle in unspoiled Mississippi, they could not alone offer high-quality care. For they would need specialists and staff and facilities which no community of a few thousand people can afford. Even if the medical profession had the will to address itself to this problem, it would be beyond its capabilities.

The middle-class suburbanite does not lack for doctors, or for specialists of all varieties, or for extensive facilities within a short drive—though some fancy hospitals with fancy prices are badly-run and badly-staffed. But he, too, is a victim of skewed distribution. Although the nation is lacking in certain medical specialties, it abounds in others. For example, we seem to have more surgeons than we need. Doubtless there are many reasons for the popularity of surgery in medical schools (in a survey some years ago, one senior explained, probably with a rolling of the eyes, "I like to cut"), but money has a great deal to do with it. Well, then, surely the law of supply and demand decrees that too many surgeons will mean more competition and reduced prices. But no, what the surplus has in fact meant in the controlled world of medical economics is more operations, and, it is suspected, more unnecessary operations. "Not only are there twice as many surgeons," reports Professor Stevens, "but twice as much surgery is done in an average American city as in an English city, with no immediately apparent benefits." This indignity, at least, the lower classes were once spared, since no one except an apprentice in need of a live body wants to operate on folks who are going to have trouble paying the bill. Though I have no figures at hand, I would guess that the advent of Medicare and Medicaid has been accompanied by a rise in the number of operations performed on the indigent—to some purpose, let us hope.

The eagerness with which people seek to have parts of themselves removed cannot be ex-

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plained entirely by the availability of men to do the removing. It is, I suppose, part of the prevailing obsession with medical wonders, fed by popularizers within and without the industry. When it comes to drugs, the obsession turns into a mania, among doctors as well as among laymen. Our doctors are, by and large, no more sophisticated on the subject than our corner druggists and have proven highly susceptible to the ravishments of high-powered detail-men for the drug companies.

But I am going afield. What has been bothering middle-class citizens is not the quality or the nature of the medical attention available to them, which is better than they or any other comparable group has ever enjoyed, but the cost. The free market (which is not free at all, since the licensing requirements designed to maintain standards also restrict entry into the field, to the economic benefit of license-holders) has proven itself unable to provide good health care at a reasonable price. In response to the complaints of Middle America, a variety of insurance schemes have grown up as buffers against the costs of serious or prolonged illness. There cannot be many readers who have not had grateful recourse to some hospitalization policy or major medical policy. However—and this is the basic message of Professor Stevens's work—the insurance schemes are in sum unsatisfactory. To resort to a favored doctors' analogy, they treat symptoms, not causes. They are counter-productive.

The role of the health industry, an unhealthy alliance led by the American Medical Association, in fighting back innovations in health delivery systems since World War I has been amply celebrated; it is a triumph of American medicine. Professor Stevens sums up the AMA's response, around 1920, to all plans which challenged the status of the independent practitioner: "Opposing the development of contract prepayment practice by corporations, urging physicians to avoid contact with hospitals which adopted any system of collecting medical fees, struggling against group hospital insurance schemes, and resisting any signs of government encroachment in medical care, the AMA sought to sustain a pattern of practice that looked not to the future but to the past." The AMA no longer opposes all it once opposed, but the final observation holds. The strategy of the AMA, which has long since outgrown the reformist impulses of its youth, has been to resist, resist, resist—until the proposal is crushed (the fate of President Truman's ambitious health program of the 1940's) or altered to the benefit of medicine's businessmen (the fate of the Kennedy-Johnson health programs of the 1960's).

The nation's interest in what AMA publicists and their friends in Congress have been pleased to call "socialized medicine" has ebbed and flowed with its interest in other social innovations. Plans for the reorganization of medical care were put forward in the early days of the New Deal, when health became "political" and group medicine became identified with leftist planners. Their plot was to make medical specialties, which had already come into their own, less expensive and more accessible. The leftists lost this one, and the outcome was the development of private insurance plans like Blue Cross and Blue Shield, which alleviated people's anxieties over meeting big bills while they shored up existing inefficient arrangements. The AMA, habituated to rejecting new proposals of any sort, was slow to appreciate what a boon these superficial remedies would prove to its members. The insurance plans have afforded a considerable measure of protection, particularly to employees of corporations, but they have also had the effect of raising the cost of medical services; enriching physicians and others in the health business at the expense of the patient's pocketbook and the public purse; and distracting the nation from working out alternative systems of medical care at a time when our technological capabilities have opened up promising alternatives.

Soon after World War II, the country again seemed ready for a health plan. President Truman's proposals looked not only toward compulsory health insurance, but toward the expansion of medical education; the establishment of community health centers, diagnostic clinics, and specialist group practices; and an improvement in disease prevention and control programs. The money and the bile that the AMA expended in the 1940's to defeat the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bills constitutes one of the more flagrant chapters in the history of American lobbying.

To move ahead some twenty years, the fate of Medicare at the hands of AMA and insurance-industry lobbyists is a prime example of a noble impulse being perverted into a bureaucratic horror. The mild Professor Stevens writes: "Seduced by the elusive image of small-scale, fee-for-service, private practice, the American medical profession of 1965 was running in its political thinking at least three decades behind the social implications of specialized medicine." The public, though troubled, does not seem to understand how poor a bargain our representatives got for us. Medicare and Medicaid have contributed to the inflation of health costs, have invited exploitation by physicians, and have short-circuited an opportunity to provide comprehensive care for the elderly and the poor. The lessons of the 1960's ought to be studied at least twice a day by the legislators now mulling over proposals for national health insurance.

AMA campaigns, during a half-century of extraordinary medical change, against group medicine, against prepayment plans, and even against the expansion of medical education, have been so self-serving and so dishonest that they have obscured reasonable criticism. All one remembers is phony image-making, pompous self-regard, and unremitting greed. The AMA has won every battle of this long war, but at considerable cost to its reputation. It is losing members, particularly young ones, and few chairmen of Congressional committees are any longer likely to defer to its spokesmen on professional grounds. Tributes to "Your

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Family Doctor" and expositions of the glories of fee-for-service medicine are not likely to bowl anybody over this time around. Still, the small-town physician, for whom the AMA speaks, continues to pack considerable punch with politicians. Doctors are notoriously rich and influential constituents. With conservatives in office and radicals doing their best to antagonize the populace, 1972 will probably not go down as the year of Socialized Medicine.

Although Professor Stevens believes that increasing demand, rising costs, and lack of coordination will force the federal government to play "a more directive" role in health care, she offers no blueprint for a health utopia. In this pluralist country, she sensibly observes, any one ideal system is undesirable as well as unattainable. Instead, she sketches a number of possible arrangements which would utilize combinations of multispecialist medical firms, hospital-based group practices, and regional health networks—the object being to make more medical services available to more people at less cost.

THE AMA's performance over the years should make it easier for us to ignore its objections and look calmly into the ways national health plans have been working elsewhere and the way group plans have been working in this country, as we go about drawing up a publicly-financed health-care system. The failure to provide sound preventive care to large numbers of people should inspire unconventional means of bringing the capabilities of our university medical centers into poor neighborhoods and out to rural areas. The experience of Medicare and Medicaid should stand as a lesson that merely pouring funds into an industry without setting standards for its performance, and most particularly for its prices, is a way of subsidizing a rich minority at the expense of a middle-class majority, a bad old American custom. It should also alert us to prepare beforehand for the increased demand on medical facilities which will follow the passage of any extended health-payment program. The fact that the federal government is already in large part supporting America's medical schools should suggest that their graduates owe rather more to society than they have up to now been prepared to acknowledge; and the fact that the government pays for medical research should suggest that the benefits of this research belong to the nation, not to middlemen. The high and increasing price of medical care should certainly suggest that there are better ways of paying for health than by buying off an already privileged profession and a few big industries.

SUCH are some of the shoulds prompted by a reading of *American Medicine and the Public Interest*. The book also raises questions which Professor Stevens has the modesty not to attempt to answer even in her 572 pages. Is health care to be regarded as a social service, and the physician as a public servant? How far do we want to go in regulating the medical profession, or any profession? And who exactly is to do the regulating? What part is there for the family doctor, whose function has been in question since the turn of the century, in a modern system of health care? Is he a costly anachronism who can be replaced by a nurse with some additional training and diagnostic equipment? If so, then how are we to go about revising state licensing requirements which are now in the grip of medical societies? Can we permit the drug industry to continue to exercise its enormous influence over health for purposes of profit? Are we wasting costly resources on headline-grabbers like heart transplants at the expense of fundamentals like training more nurses? Are the exhortations to keep checking oneself for signs and symptoms and then rush off to one's doctor at the slightest hint of anything, a way of diverting resources from those who need them desperately to those who may not need them at all, and who might in fact be mentally healthier if they didn't worry so much about their health?

The Congressmen now studying national health-insurance proposals need not address themselves to such questions. It will be enough if they ask themselves, as Professor Stevens has, wherein yesterday's insurance plans have failed, and go on from there.

An American Painter

EDWARD HOPPER. Text by LLOYD GOODRICH. *308 pp. 246 illustrations. Harry N. Abrams. $50.00.*

Reviewed by JOHN HOLLANDER

IN 1829, William Cullen Bryant concluded a sonnet to his friend Thomas Cole who was about to set off for Europe, warning the painter against allowing his American vision to be darkened by the glittering ruins and visions he would be encountering: "Gaze on these till the tears shall dim thy sight,/But keep that earlier, wilder image bright," he pleaded. Cole returned from Europe with double vision intact; his major painting was able to render the earlier landscape through transparencies of the later, traveled world of sights, and Bryant's warning, in a generalized form, became a central one for the American literary and artistic imagination in the following century. Edward Hopper (1882-1967) was trained as a painter in New York ashcan-school realism, went off to Europe for three visits between 1906 and 1910, and returned to paint not a wilder image but an increasingly deeper one that eventually came to make the slovenly American wilderness surround it. In the great series of canvases starting with his 1930 *Early Sunday Morning*, he evolved from earlier modes of genre scene and urban landscape a new and commanding painted world.

Hopper's world embodied a central vision of America that appeared to be so oblique that few of his admirers recognized its importance. "The ruin, or blank, that we see when we look at nature," wrote Emerson, "is in our own eye. The axis of vision is not coincident with the axis of things,

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and so they appear not transparent, but opaque." Hopper's axis saw into the heart of American things. His paintings glimpse this country not in its hours of industry, but in its moments of interstice—before or after the working day, on the fringes of recreation, the countryside when it is at some strange point in the day's or the year's cycle, the rural road leading to a darkening nowhere, the two or three people early or late in an otherwise empty theater, the mundane architecture become monumental in the clarity of its image, the men and women in the lacunae of the erotic. It is a world unbroken, yet not functioning. His urban landscapes have all the natural power of the rural; his interior scenes, growing barer of irrelevancy, became in the last fifteen years of his life imaginatively immense.

The first of his great, emptied pictures, the astonishing *Rooms by the Sea* of 1951, the door opening on a vision of ocean only, the bare interiors occupied by a half-seen picture on a far wall and immense yellow quadrilaterals of sunlight, was painted at a crystallizing period in the history of art in New York, when abstract expressionism was about to seize its day. The even barer *Seen in an Empty Room* of 1963 recapitulated this glimpse. His penultimate canvas, the *Chair Car* of 1965, is almost a quintessential Hopper painting: a bluish parlor car on no known railroad, its interior perspective's vanishing-point at 10 o'clock, is almost totally stripped down—the décor and period-style nullified, the clothes abstract of mode—and lines of window-rectangles converge, with an even more directed row of yellow spills of those windows' light, toward a final, closed door. Four passengers exemplify four modes of absorption; only on the one who seems aware of another's presence is there a touch of red.

Throughout the dominance of abstract painting in New York, throughout the iconographic crisis following it that led to the revolting idiocy of pop, Hopper's popular reputation was condescendingly and irrelevantly tied, by both admirers and detractors, to an inexact notion of the "figurative." More recently, conceptual prestidigitations over pictures of stripes, by the sort of younger art critic who has attempted to perform the part Clement Greenberg played for an earlier phase of fashion, have reinforced the notion that an interest in Hopper is either naive or intellectually irresponsible. A recent showing of the Hopper bequest to the Whitney Museum of American Art attracted, according to an admittedly uncomfortable official, all sorts of Middle-American types who had been content so far to stick with the beauty of American Reality reverently portrayed by the slapdash Andrew Wyeth. (Note that the same official never showed any discomfort at the non-Middle-American types who solemnly came to inspect piles of garbage and burlap exhibited under the museum's authoritative auspices last year.)

During all these years, Hopper seldom got the interpretive criticism he deserved; the usual commentary resounded with "evocations" and "loneliness" and "poetic" and "the city," but no attempt even at accurate anecdotal, or formal, analysis of what happens in his pictures, let alone the really large problematic areas of the relation between style and subject, and perhaps the mythology of his envisioned world. Of the magnificent *House by the Railroad* in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, one could adduce E. A. Robinson's lines "They are all gone away,/The house is shut and still,/There is nothing more to say," and have them apply to Hopper's pictures of all going away as well.

GIVEN his great stature and the nevertheless problematic character of his reputation, a book even of massive proportions and expense devoted to Hopper's art could have been most welcome. This huge object, nine pounds in weight, measuring more than thirteen inches by sixteen and quite impossible to manage, contains 246 reproductions of paintings, watercolors, etchings, and drawings, including some materials from the Hopper bequest only recently made public. There are 88 color plates. There is an accompanying text by Lloyd Goodrich, a former director of the Whitney Museum and a friend of Hopper's. The book is a moral outrage. At almost every place it disappoints, and occasionally appalls: the selection of paintings to be reproduced, the unforgivably poor quality of the plates, the lack of responsible scholarly apparatus, the at-best weak text will not, considering the price and pretentiousness of this volume, do.

BUT the separate areas of shoddiness coalesce in the light of a more general defect. Starting from the jacket-blurb's characterization of Hopper as "one of the best-known and best-loved of American artists," one is aware of a whole mode of presentation: a flashily over-designed format, a treatment of the text as blocks of layout rather than as commentary on plates (Mr. Goodrich's remarks become words to glance over, and it is no consolation that such is the treatment they often merit). The shape of Hopper's *oeuvre* is subtly and sometimes crudely distorted by the book's layout (and by some omissions to which I shall return shortly). The total effect is to perpetuate the fictive Hopper adored by all America (a useful one, however—it enabled him to live from early on by his art without compromising it); this book's subject is Hopper as Wyeth, and Mr. Goodrich, at any rate, shares the blame for it.

It is a project reminiscent of the conspiracy (to which the poet himself contributed) which promulgated Robert Frost as Carl Sandburg. Frost, incidentally, acquired for himself some time before his death a biographer who would vulgarize his subject, and a curatorial friend who, as posthumous editor, would mutilate the texts of his poems with brutally insensitive re-punctuations. I am afraid that Mr. Goodrich's role, in this volume, is not unlike these. He is certainly responsible for a good deal of what prevents this from being a respectable tribute, let alone a means of bringing out Hopper from behind the mask of his reputation. He even manages to make what should be powerful and in-

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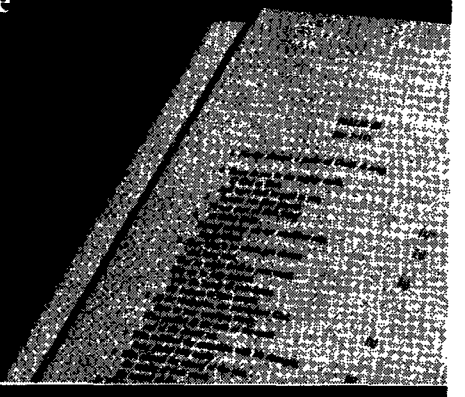

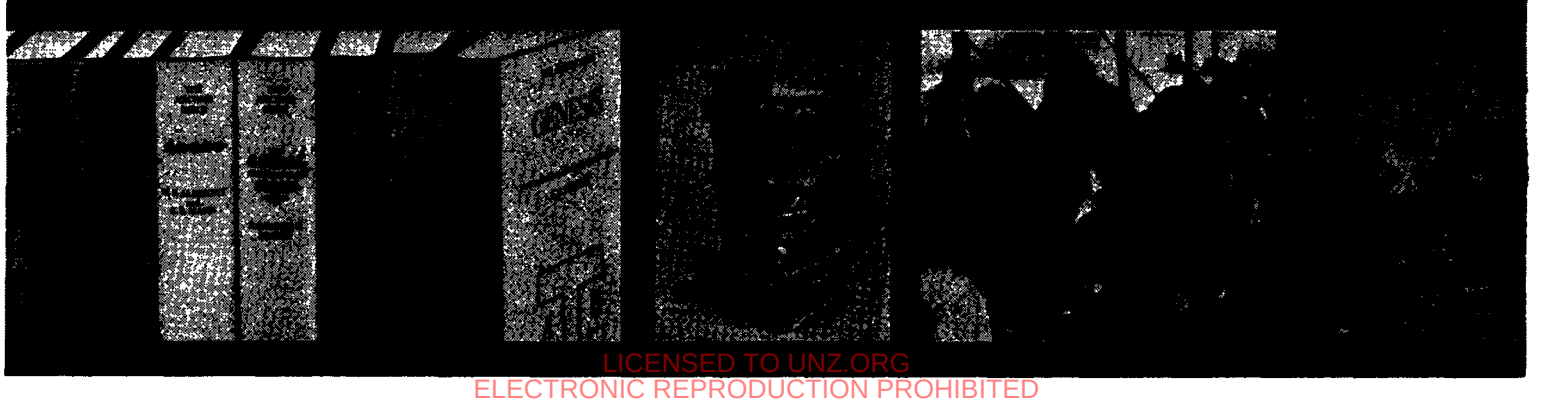

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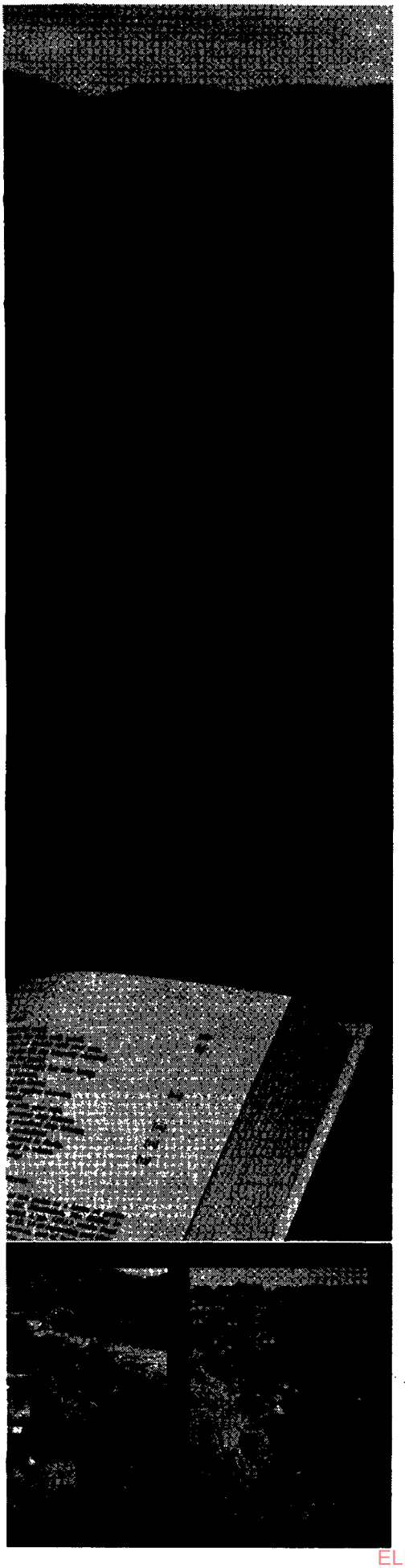

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structive praise sound like inept special pleading: "He was on the cover of *Time*. He was interviewed again and again, appeared on television, and was the subject of many articles." Or this: "[Hopper was the] central figure around which the organizer, William C. Seitz, assembled a show of advanced artists depicting the American environment, including a large proportion of pop artists" (the last seven words sound italicized).

These words are not addressed to an art-lover, but presumably to an art-buyer. Such an artless consumer would not care that there is no catalogue, that Irma B. Jaffe's *Selected Bibliography*, prepared for Mr. Goodrich's 1964 exhibition catalogue of Hopper at the Whitney, is updated here but unacknowledged. Neither would such a buyer know or care about the poor reproductions. The color textures are wrong, and some famous masterpieces, like the *New York Movie* in the Museum of Modern Art (the first painting I know of to contain a strip of movie-on-the-screen), look like a used-up page of the Edward Hopper Coloring Book. Black-and-white values are often hopelessly distorted (as in the 1943 *Summertime*, which looks as if it had been painted during a total eclipse). But there is worse: a major painting of 1943, the night-scene called *Hotel Lobby*—with its almost Balthusian lurking suggestions in a dark dining-room beyond and its half-accessible view of further interiority, in a half-glimpsed desk clerk—is horribly mutilated by a reproduction which crops a narrow but crucial left-hand margin strip, showing a vertical glass door running the height of the picture reflecting and refracting the interior light.

THE selection of reproductions is generous, but generous enough so that a few views of Maine lighthouses might have given way to two of Hopper's finest and central paintings. The *Excursion into Philosophy* (1959) is an explicit treatment of the *post-coitum-triste* theme which faintly shadows many of his visions: the inevitable late-Hopper room, a window on the right, two yellow polygons of sun smearing wall, floor, and the lower back and legs of a nude female figure, her face turned to the wall behind a bed at the left on which is sitting a clothed man, facing outward, his feet dipped into the spill of yellow, a book on the bed at his right hand. The visionary confrontation between the intruding rectangle of light and the human presences, so common in Hopper, always unavowed, is here at its most elegant. The painting is excluded, without mention. Also missing is its slightly more rhetorical reciprocal version, painted nine years earlier, the *Summer in the City* (window on the left, a naked man prone on the bed, his face buried in a pillow, the clothed, brooding woman, her feet also dipped into the patch of light, no book). When Hopper's erotic vision can pass for nothing more gamy than a slightly condescending eye of the genre photographer (which is how the vision of the couples in *Nighthawks* or the 1947 *Summer Evening* might easily be misread), its existence is allowed, although Mr. Goodrich's remarks about Puritanism and sensuality are vague and misdirected, and he writes about nudity as if Kenneth Clark never had.

At the very least, Mr. Goodrich might have cared enough to write a new text. This volume's is essentially (and nowhere does it say so) that of the catalogue of the 1964 retrospective show, with some big paragraphs cut into tiny ones (for the benefit of the hard-of-reading?), and brought up to date; also added are a few informal and chatty reminiscences of the painter and his wife ("When I told him that in a lecture I had used a slide of *High Noon* together with a Mondrian his only comment was 'You kill me' "—was even the laconic Hopper joking with hidden literalness?). The text is valuable or interesting only when it reveals an occasional flash of fact—never of insight—such as Hopper's admission that he frequently got his subjects for paintings while driving (and thus while seen through a window, possibly even through glass). Thankfully, too, Mr. Goodrich quotes often from an essay by Hopper on Charles Burchfield in which, as is sometimes the case with writers as well, one artist in writing of another literally glosses his own work. Thus, Hopper refers to the sense "of the interior and exterior of a building seen simultaneously. A common visual sensation"—one is tempted to add, "Yes, but visionary, not visual, and commonly Hopper's." Hopper also writes of this world, not the one he painted, but the one constantly hovering at the margins of his own:

> Our native architecture with its hideous beauty, its fantastic roofs, pseudo-Gothic, French Mansard, Colonial, mongrel or what not, with eye-searing color or delicate harmonies of faded paint, shouldering one another along interminable streets that taper off into swamps or dumpheaps—these appear again and again, as they should in any honest delineation of the American scene. . . .

IT IS not only that Mr. Goodrich seldom hits the mark with an observation of his own, but that he shatters innocently bystanding ideas. Thus: "His vision is far from illusionistic representation; while the vision is naturalistic, the forms are those of art." Whatever the last phrase may mean, it is precisely Hopper's gifts as a visionary painter which are being slighted. His extremely contrived and staged interiors and exteriors, strangely reciprocal rather than antithetical, come from propoundings of a violently personal sort, but they reflect the whole problem of such propoundings of the real in American romantic tradition. What Hopper sees "in the metaphysical streets of the physical town," as Wallace Stevens says, is not a "naturalistic vision," any more than his scenes can be said even remotely to constitute social criticism (if anything, they are criticism of nature). His eye wipes away details as if they were evasive metaphors, and his visual fictions are in every sense "abstract"—taken away, taken away from, reconstituted, made up.

But Mr. Goodrich's readings of actual pictures in this commentary not only fail usefully to inform (in some instances, we would like to know something about the location of a building or scene—are all

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the urban views New York City, for instance?), but they fail even at freshman art-history structural analysis. *Early Sunday Morning* is one of Hopper's most famous and widely reproduced paintings (consult the cover of the New York telephone directory), and yet he can talk of its horizontality as being "broken by the verticals of barber pole and hydrant, and the repeated pattern of doorways and windows." In fact, the barber pole leans to the left, about five degrees off the vertical, as if forced over by the pressure of rising sunlight. The windows inaugurate a visual theme in Hopper: the lower shop-windows, heavy-lidded with awnings, and the ten smaller ones on the upper storey, each raised or lowered to a different height, lidded with curtains or shade, reflect our own awakening eyes to the degree that somewhere in our reading of the scene, we can suppose these buildings to be composed of ourselves. And the long, ambiguous horizontal, lying along the sidewalk between the curb line and storefronts: is it a secondary step up, such as some sidewalks have? Is it the longest shadow in the picture, of something lying not merely outside it but beyond it?

HOPPER's reputation among those who have centrality—and for whom "respresentational" is as monolithic a term as "abstract" is for the audience the publishers seem to have in mind—will not be helped by this dreadful volume. The poet Mark Strand has written briefly but profoundly about *House by the Railroad*, and if he could be persuaded to write a monograph, it would be a most impressive one. More art critics who have read American literature and understand our visionary tradition must find terms to deal with Hopper's mythology; it took years before art historians who read Byron got to deal with Thomas Cole, and Hopper must perhaps await commentators steeped in the Emerson he knew and the Wallace Stevens and W. C. Williams he probably didn't. *Until a major* American visionary is paid more than simplistic tribute, one must conjecture and wait.

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The Stater was a silver coin used widely in pre-Christian Palestine. One side shows the Emperor Augustus, the other a female figure, the Tyche of Antioch, the River Orontes at her feet.

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98-117 C.E.
This penny was current in Palestine after the fall of the Second Temple. During the reign of the Emperor Trajan, a major revolt was undertaken by Palestinian Jews against Roman oppression.

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37-44 C.E.
This coin records the death of Herodes Agrippa. He was the grandson of Herod the Great, rewarded with Judaea for his assistance to the Emperor Claudius.

JUDEA CAPTA (Coin of Vespasian)
70 C.E.
The prophet Isaiah foretold the fall of Jerusalem in the First Revolt of 70 C.E. This is one of several coins struck in Palestine by the Romans to remind the Jews of their defeat. A weeping woman is shown with head bowed, seated beside a date palm (symbol of Judaea). Obverse shows the emperor, with the Latin inscription, "Imperator Caesar Vespasianus Augustus."

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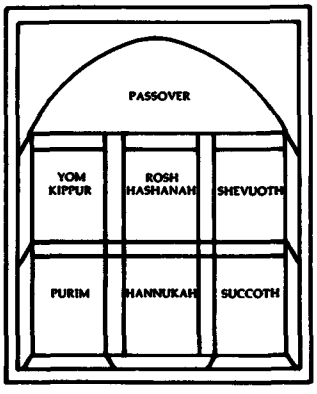

Harry Lieberman's own life is as fascinating as his paintings, which win high critical praise wherever they are shown. Although he started his painting career late (at the age of 78) and as a primitive, there is nothing amateurish about his work. In fact, the richness of the color and detail in his interpretations of Biblical themes imbue them with great vitality and warmth.

Born in a typical *shtetl*, Gnieveshev, pop. 500, near Warsaw, nephew of the village Rabbi, Harry Lieberman followed the Hasidic Sect of Mystic Ecstasy founded by the Baal-Shem-Tov. He came to this country in 1906 and worked at first as a clothing cutter on the lower East Side of New York. The confectionary business beckoned next, and the one he and his wife started grew and prospered until he retired to Great Neck, New York, in 1950. There his primary interest was chess but, when his chess partner fell ill—Harry Lieberman turned to painting.

Now in his nineties, he is still exhibiting his work in both one-man and group exhibitions; and it is collected both here and abroad by museums, individuals, and institutions.

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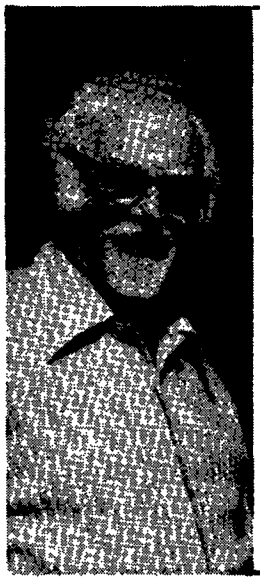

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